





# Iran starts wargames in Gulf

DUBAI (R) — Iran's supreme leader arrived in the Gulf port of Bandar Abbas on the strategic Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday to watch the start of amphibious wargames by 200,000 troops, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported.

It said Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who is commander-in-chief of Iran's half-million-strong armed forces, arrived in the city to a warm welcome from local officials and people.

Chanted slogans in support of the supreme leader echoed in the Qods Mosque on his arrival, the agency said in a report from Bandar

Abbas. City streets were decorated with banners, posters of the Islamic republic's founder the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Iranian flag and coloured lights, it said.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards were to begin three days of exercises in the Gulf on Tuesday evening to train for surprise attacks, IRNA said.

IRNA quoted the Guards' Deputy Commander Brigadier General Rahim Safavi as saying 200,000 troops would take part in the exercises codenamed "Tariq Al Quds" (Road to Jerusalem) covering four provinces.

The troops, including volunteer Basij forces, would test surface-to-air, shore-to-sea and surface-to-surface missiles during the three-day games. Gen. Safavi said Revolutionary Guard experts had the technical know-how to build various missiles.

Iran said last week its army would hold amphibious exercises in the Gulf to train for surprise attacks against "enemies" posing threats to the Islamic republic.

IRNA quoted Gen. Safavi as saying Iran, which holds wargames in the Gulf regularly, wanted "to upgrade the quality of its personnel so that it can better defend

Islamic ideals and safeguard territorial integrity."

He stressed that security in the Gulf was a collective responsibility "of all regional countries and as such Iran is holding the Tariq-Al Quds manoeuvres as a step to demonstrate its prowess for guaranteeing Persian Gulf security."

He said his country would not allow any "alien power to destabilise regional security."

Gen. Safavi said the departure of "intruding forces" — a term often used in Iran to describe U.S. armed forces in the Gulf — would help enhance cooperation among regional states.

# PNA police arrest 25 Palestinian teachers

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — At least 25 Palestinian teachers were arrested by Palestinian National Authority (PNA) police on Monday for refusing to end a strike which has paralysed public sector schools in the West Bank, teachers and relatives said.

The teachers, from various West Bank cities, began their strike at the start of April demanding higher pay in the first labour dispute involving PNA employees.

"Twenty-five teachers or more have been arrested by the Palestinian police today and tonight," a teacher who did not want to be identified told Reuters.

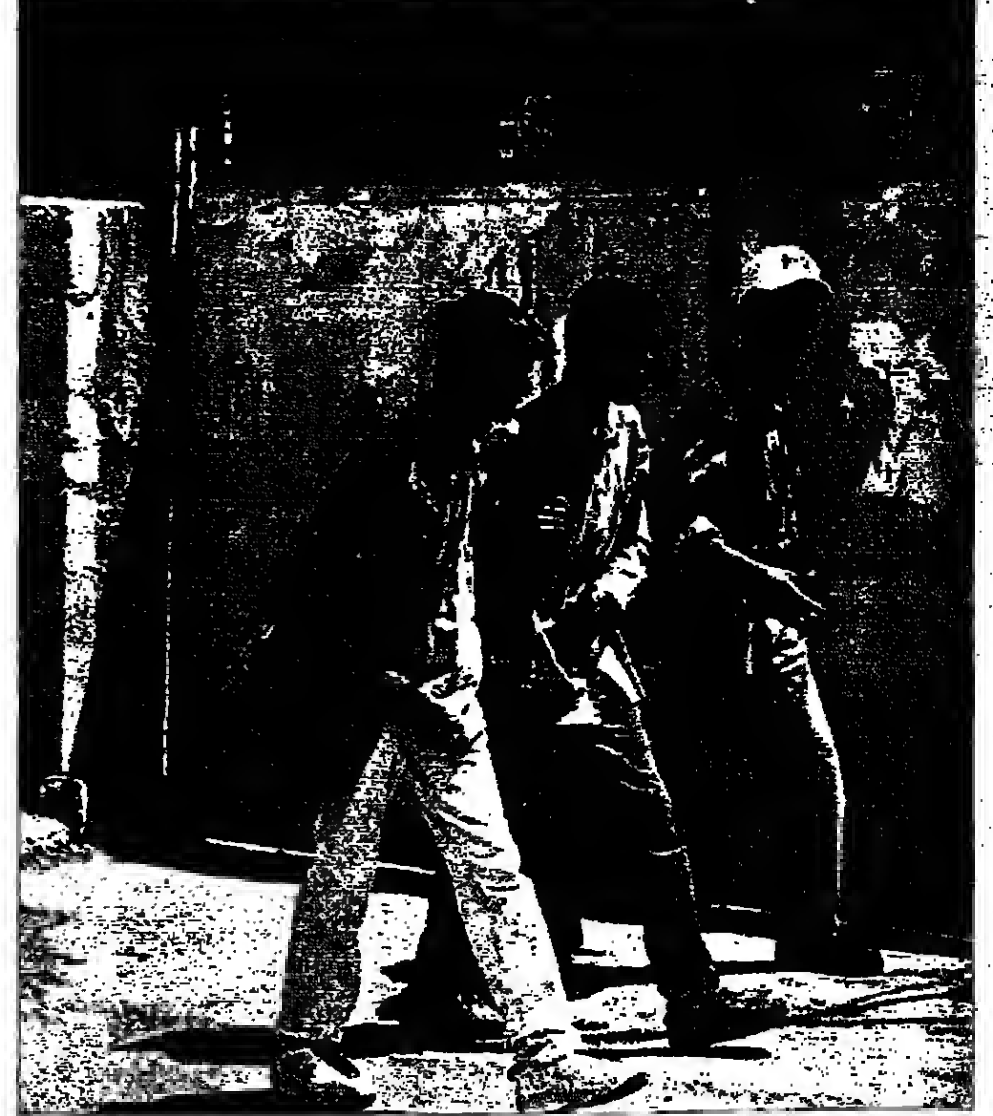
Relatives said Palestinian police in civilian clothes arrested the teachers from their homes.

Teachers said the arrests came after a stormy meeting between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and teachers' representatives in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Sunday during which teachers refused to end the strike after their demands were rejected.

But PNA officials said teachers had promised Mr. Arafat to end their strike on Monday and the arrests came after teachers were seen on Monday forcing students to leave their classes.

"We are astonished at the continuation of the strike after they agreed in a meeting with President Arafat to end the strike," Tayeb Abdul Rahim, general secretary of the Palestinian presidency, told Palestine Television.

"We consider this an incitement against the Palestinian legitimate institutions and a deliberate attempt to create



Three Palestinian students walk past the gate of their closed school on Tuesday in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Palestinian teachers on the West Bank vowed to pursue an unprecedented strike against President Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority despite the arrest of 25 of their leaders (AFP photo)

chaos," he said.

The PNA issued a statement broadcast by Voice of Palestine on Monday appealing to teachers and students "to immediately return to schools."

"We call on all teachers and students to understand that the homeland and the Palestinian National Authority are passing through difficult political and economic hardships," the statement said.

Up to 18,000 teachers have been on strike. About 20,000 school teachers are on the PNA's payroll in the West Bank.

"The PNA took charge of most of the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank under a 1993 self-rule deal with Israel. The authority provides free education to

Palestinians until high school.

Teachers say that average monthly pay is about \$400, barely enough to cover basic expenses. Education Minister Yasser Amr told Voice of Palestine Radio earlier in the month that the ministry had offered pay rises of up to 15 per cent despite budget constraints.

# Peruvian soldiers storm residence killing all 14 rebels

(Continued from page 1)

comrades. Mr. Fujimori flatly refused.

Mr. Tudela and Mr. Aoki were in a military hospital, officials said.

Several hostages were whisked to the military hospital and a police clinic in at least six other locations.

Officials said soldiers were seen being taken out on stretchers but only two are reported dead.

The crackdown, which came after Mr. Fujimori arranged for the hostage-holders to travel abroad for asylum in Cuba or the Dominican Republic, came weeks after rebels rejected that offer and continued to dig in their heels. Japan had pressured for a peaceful resolution to the standoff which started when the rebels stormed the mansion at a December 17 gala cocktail party. But the raid could not have come without a green light from Tokyo, most experts agreed, as the siege went

on for months inside Japan's diplomatic compound. However, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said Wednesday that Peru's government failed to inform Japan that it would raid the residence of its embassy and free the hostages.

"Our country was not this is very regrettable," Mr. Hashimoto said in a speech hours after the attack. "I would like to offer my appreciation from the bottom of my heart to President Fujimori and Peruvian government officials for their timely, great rescue operations," he told a hurriedly arranged media conference.

Japan is Peru's number-one foreign aid source, having given more than \$750 million in grants and loans in the past five years. Tokyo pledged another \$600 million in development assistance in August.

The United States

blamed the hostage-takers Tuesday for what it said were "some casualties" suffered.

"It is clear there have been some casualties," said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns, adding that the leftist rebels must bear "full and complete responsibility."

He said the United States deeply regrets the casualties, which he said once again demonstrate the high price of terrorism.

He also pointed out that the Peruvian government had tried to end the crisis peacefully.

U.S. Secretary of State William Cohen said in an interview with CNN Wednesday that the U.S. had no official word the event will take place but it did not take them by surprise because "there were signs and indications the event will take place." When asked by a CNN reporter if the U.S. had any role in the operation, he answered: "We have

offered our services to the Peruvian government but this was the action of the Peruvian government alone."

He refused to describe the services they had offered. He added: "The world stands in condemnation of terrorist actions. This proves that terrorism does not pay and if there are legitimate demands, they need to be addressed in a peaceful fashion."

Mr. Fujimori, the only ethnic Japanese head of government outside Japan, won support from Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto after they met on the crisis in Toronto in January. Mr. Fujimori for months sought a negotiated settlement but in the end stayed true to his hard-fought rebel-busting image. Even though he had said that his troops would never storm the building unless a hostage was hurt, it is not yet known if the guerrilla fighters had given him such reason to act.

# Court sentences Abu Khajil to 14 years

(Continued from page 1)

abuse of trust and forgery of a government seal.

The ex-consul was declared guilty of possessing Judge Issam Abu Ghneim and Judge Mohammad Ghreir of three charges. The charges were selling one child and attempting to sell another, possessing illegal wireless devices, forgery and use of forged documents.

"The accused confessed to selling one child in 1995, and the prosecution was able to prove another attempted baby sale in March of 1996," the judge said.

In its one-hour ruling, the court found Mr. Abu Khajil guilty of endorsing a forged document whereby Ms. Laji provided a false name for the father of the

child saying he was in Sri Lanka and secured a birth certificate which in turn was endorsed by the consulate to make it authentic.

Following that the document was forged, Mr. Abu Khajil handed it over to the Dutch couple as an official paper," the court maintained.

The court also stated that Mr. Abu Khajil illegally owned wireless scanners and a walkie-talkie.

"The hearing of such devices should obtain a special permission which Mr. Abu Khajil did not have," Judge Abu Ghneim told a packed court room.

The court acquitted Mr. Abu Khajil of the additional seven counts.

"The prosecution failed to present sufficient evidence in any of these charges, and in some cases

the prosecution based its charges on assumptions rather than providing solid evidence," Judge Abu Ghneim said.

Prosecutor Ma'moun Mneizel had asked the court for the maximum penalty.

Mr. Abu Khajil, who served almost 13 months in jail, was released twice in January of 1997, when he was released for 10 days on a JD100,000 bail, and the second time was on April 10 when he was released on a JD 20,000 bail.

Mr. Abu Khajil is also being tried at the Criminal Court on charges of raping four Sri Lankan women.

However, the four women changed their initial statements made to the prosecutor and now are facing perjury charges.

# Arafat in Jordan today

(Continued from page 1)

But a meeting between President Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy in Malta last week succeeded in breaking the ice between the two sides, although it failed to resume official talks.

Meanwhile, Minister of Foreign Affairs Fayez Tarawneh said Jordan will intensify talks with Syria to bring relations between the two countries back to normal.

Dr. Tarawneh, who was speaking to reporters following the Cabinet session, added that his meeting with his Syrian counterpart, Farouk Sharaa, in Malta last week was "very positive" and the Kingdom expects more contacts between the two

neighbouring countries.

He told reporters that during his meeting with Mr. Sharaa, Jordan found willingness from the Syrian side to intensify contacts on all levels.

"We hope that these contacts will result in a new formula that would organise the relationship between the two sides... and God willing, high ranking meetings will take place soon," Mr. Tarawneh said without elaboration.

The Kingdom's relations with its northern neighbour soured following the October 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty which angered the Syrian leadership.

# Peru rebel says fight against "system of repression" will go on

(Continued from page 1)

martyrs for their marxist cause in a country in which half the population of 24 million live in poverty.

"We have been in contact permanently with the members of my party," Mr. Velazco said, adding that what they did was what they had said they would do: "that they would resist until the end."

"The present regime has taken criminal steps with this operation," he said. "There had been some apparent headway made in the negotiations," he added. "Mr. Alberto Fujimori had even spoken about this," Mr. Velazco said. "He had said that we were to await a peaceful decision."

"But the need to hide the

crimes of their death squadron... led to a military raid to solve the crisis," the spokesman said, referring to a well-known case of the military having killed innocent civilians.

The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement MRTA is a small group of well-trained and well-indoctrinated rebels, according to analysts, and never achieved nor sought the grassroots, peasant support of its long-time rival, the Maoist Shining Path.

The MRTA — inspired by the teachings of Ernesto "Che" Guevara — emerged in the 1980s with a vow to overthrow the government and create a communist state.

The group, founded by Victor Polay Campos, took its name from Jose Gabriel

Condorcanqui Tupac Amaru — a direct descendant of the last Inca leader Tupac Amaru — who led an Indian uprising against the Spanish crown in the late 18th century.

The MRTA has been a thorn in the flesh of the Peruvian government for more than a decade, carrying out some 500 major armed attacks since 1984 and engaging in some 120 military clashes with the government.

Independent sources attribute more 1,000 deaths to the organisation since 1984. But the MRTA was always overshadowed by the Shining Path which was responsible for more than 97 per cent of all armed attacks and 97 per cent of deaths in the same period.

## JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19  
PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Cartoon — Adventures of the Rainbow Pond  
14:30 ..... Flintstones  
15:00 ..... French Programmes  
16:00 ..... America's Funniest People  
16:25 ..... Spell Binder  
16:50 ..... Doc. — Challenge  
17:15 ..... Border Town  
18:00 ..... French Programmes  
19:30 ..... News Headlines  
19:35 ..... Comedy — Grace Under Fire  
20:00 ..... Children's Diary  
20:30 ..... Challenges  
21:10 Drama — Spencer for Hire  
22:00 ..... News in English  
22:25 ..... Cobra  
23:00 ..... Hart to Hart

## PRAYER TIMES

04:31 ..... Fajr  
05:54 ..... (Sunrise) Duha  
12:34 ..... Dhuhr  
16:12 ..... Asr  
19:14 ..... Maghreb  
20:37 ..... Isha

## CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifiah, Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590  
Church of the Annunciation

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 637440.  
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366  
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.  
Armenian International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457  
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

## WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology  
Hot, dry, and dusty weather conditions will prevail with winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be warm, winds southerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman ..... 16/33  
Aqaba ..... 20/39  
Deserts ..... 14/34

Jordan Valley ..... 18/35  
Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 31, Aqaba 37 Humidity readings: Amman 21 per cent, Aqaba 20 per cent.

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

## NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Faysal Al Dabbas ..... 759155  
Dr. Adnan Zaghloul ..... 898140  
Dr. Fakher Bileel ..... 552233  
Dr. Mazen Nballi ..... 675485  
Firas pharmacy ..... 661912  
Ferdows pharmacy ..... 890280  
Al Asema pharmacy ..... 637055  
Al Salam pharmacy ..... 636730  
Yacoub pharmacy ..... 644945  
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660  
Nairokh pharmacy ..... 623672  
Najib pharmacy ..... 847632

IRBID:  
Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh ..... 250080  
Al Quds pharmacy ..... (—)  
ZARQA:  
Dr. Zubour Al Qadi ..... 906606  
Khalifeh pharmacy ..... 985417

## EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111  
Civil Defence Department 661111  
Civil Defence Immediate

## HOSPITALS

AMMAN:  
Bussein Medical Centre

Rescue 630341  
Civil Defence Emergency 199  
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777  
Fire Brigade ..... 617101  
Blood Bank ..... 775121  
Highway Police ..... 843402  
Traffic Police ..... 896390  
Public Security Department 630321  
Hotel Complaints ..... 605800  
Price Complaints ..... 661176  
Water and Sewerage Complaints ..... 897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints ..... 787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121  
Overseas Calls ..... 010230  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs ..... 623101  
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101  
Jordan Television ..... 773111  
Radio Jordan ..... 774111  
Water Authority ..... 680100  
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615  
Electric Power Company 636381  
RJ Flight Information 08-53200  
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

813813/32  
Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6  
Akileh Maternity, 642441/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362  
Malhas, J. Amman ..... 636140  
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071  
Shmeisani Hospital 669131  
University Hospital 845845  
Al-Musabir Hospital 667227/9  
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37  
Al-Ahli, Abdali ..... 664164/6  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3  
Al-Bashir, ..... 775111/26  
Army, Marka ..... 891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50  
Amal Hospital ..... 674155  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ..... 865199

ZARQA:  
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323  
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560  
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732  
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:  
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555  
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275  
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:  
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER  
QUEEN ALIA  
INTERNATIONAL  
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

## ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

08:00 ..... Damascus (RJ)  
08:00 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
08:35 ..... Larnaca (RJ)  
09:35 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
11:00 ..... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
15:30 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
15:40 ..... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

16:30 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
18:15 ..... Paris (RJ)  
19:10 ..... London, Berlin (RJ)  
19:20 ..... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)  
19:25 ..... Brussels, Geneva (RJ)  
19:30 ..... Toronto, Montreal (RJ)  
21:30 ..... Vienna, Istanbul (RJ)

21:30 ..... Jakarta (add) (RJ)  
21:40 ..... Rome (RJ)  
23:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
23:30 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
00:45 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
03:50 ..... Cairo (RJ)  
04:55 ..... Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)  
06:45 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

08:15 ..... Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)  
10:30 ..... Cairo (MS)  
11:00 ..... Sanaa, Hudaidah (IY)  
12:00 ..... Jeddah (SV)  
12:55 ..... Bucharest (RO)  
13:10 ..... Doha, Abu Dhabi (GF)  
14:30 ..... Tunis (TU)  
16:20 ..... Algiers (AH)  
17:00 ..... Doha (Q7)  
19:00 ..... London (GA)  
19:30 ..... Istanbul, Damascus (PK)  
20:40 ..... London (BA)  
21:10 ..... Beirut (ME)  
21:10 ..... Paris, Damascus (AF)  
21:30 ..... Tel Aviv (LY)  
23:20 ..... Istanbul (TK)  
23:25 ..... Amsterdam (KL)  
23:30 ..... Athens (OA)  
05:15 ..... Ankara (TK)

DEPARTURES

0710 ..... Brussels (add) (RJ)  
08:00 ..... Paris (add) (RJ)  
09:30 ..... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

10:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
11:30 ..... Vienna (RJ)  
11:45 ..... Istanbul, Rome (RJ)  
12:45 ..... Berlin, London (RJ)  
17:30 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
18:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
20:45 ..... Colombo (RJ)  
21:00 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
21:45 ..... New Delhi (RJ)  
21:45 ..... Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)  
21:50 ..... Bombay (RJ)  
23:40 ..... Sanaa (RJ)  
23:59 ..... Cairo (RJ)  
23:59 ..... Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)  
00:15 ..... Dubai (RJ)  
01:15 ..... Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)  
01:40 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

06:50 ..... Larnaca (CY)  
08:45 ..... Beirut (ME)  
09:25 ..... London (BA)  
10:00 ..... Damascus, Istanbul (PK)  
11:20 ..... Cairo (MS)  
12:40 ..... Hudaidah, Sanaa (IY)  
13:30 ..... Jeddah (SV)  
14:00 ..... Bahrain, Muscat (GF)  
15:30 ..... Tunis (TV)  
15:50 ..... Vienna (OS)  
17:20 ..... Sharjah (AH)  
17:50 ..... Doha (Q7)  
20:15 ..... Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)  
21:40 ..... Berdassar (CA)  
22:50 ..... Tel Aviv (LY)  
23:55 ..... Damascus, Paris (AF)  
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04:00 ..... Athens (OA)  
06:15 ..... Istanbul (TK)



# Home News

## Crown Prince m

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Hassan Tuesday met with Dr. Oteiba, private advisor to the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

Dr. Oteiba conveyed Sheikh Zayed's greetings to both His Majesty King Hussein and Prince Hassan and affirmed the President wished the King continued good health.

In the meeting at the Royal Court, Prince Hassan emphasised the importance of maintaining close contacts between Arab countries, especially in the Arab World, to assert its identity.

To achieve this end, the Crown Prince emphasised Arab countries ought to maintain close ties and roundtable consultations to explore areas of future cooperation, while formulating a conceptual framework for the future of all.

He stressed the importance of information via the West, through main-

ing contact with educational and cultural institutions, in order to reflect Islamic humanitarian concepts and highlight its tolerance as well as the introduction of Arab culture and values.

Regarding recent terrorist activity in Jerusalem, Prince Hassan emphasised the need to differentiate

between housing — a legitimate need for Palestinians and Israelis alike — and the settlement activity, which he maintained represents an Israeli political goal at the expense of legitimate Palestinian rights.

Dr. Oteiba praised existing cooperation between Jordan and the UAE,

describing it as a model to be emulated by other Arab countries.

The meeting was attended by King Hussein's Cultural Adviser HRH Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, UAE Ambassador to Jordan Ahmad Ali Nasser and Director of Prince Hassan's office Michel Hamaneh.

AMMAN (AP) — Prime Minister Abul Kalam Tuesday met with officials of the Palestinian government Hamas, about the possible extradition of their jailed leader, Musa Abu Marzouk, from the United States.

Khaled Mahabbat, head of the Hamas Political Bureau, said talks centered on Mr. Abu Marzouk's targeted legal situation following an Israeli decision to cancel an extradition request for the Hamas leader.

"There are negotiations to find a legal outlet from the U.S. Immigration Service against Mr. Abu Marzouk and his extradition to the Arab country where we hope will be Jordan," Mr. Mahabbat said.

He declined to elaborate on other Hamas representatives and government officials refused comment.

Last Monday, U.S. District Judge Denise Coe refused to release Mr. Abu Marzouk, saying Israel's decision to suspend extradition proceedings meant he should remain in the custody of immigration authorities.

In 1995, Israel asked for Mr. Abu Marzouk's extradition as a suspect in 1987 terrorist attacks from 1987 to 1994 which killed 47 people.

Israel, recently, dropped the request, stating it would increase regional tension.

## Premier meets with Hamas officials regarding situation of jailed leader, Musa Abu Marzouk

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AMMAN (J.T.) — The government has resolved to promptly offer medium-term loans to farmers whose harvests were considered badly damaged by earlier frost and who intend to plant new crops during the current season, according to Al Ra'i Arabic daily.

Al Ra'i quoted Nimer Nabulsi, head of the Jordanian Agricultural Credit Corporation, as confirming that the government has also approved rescheduling those farmers' debts which are due in 1997 if they so request and if their crops were damaged by the past winter season's frost.

Mr. Nabulsi maintained the corporation's 20 national offices have already begun receiving applications for loans from farmers including those in the Jordan Valley.

He affirmed that corporation teams would be visiting the affected farm lands in order to estimate the extent of the damage.

Jordan Television Monday interviewed a number of farmers in the Jordan Valley who lamented that produce damage was overwhelming in some areas.

Mr. Nabulsi requested that farmers promptly send in their loan applications as the corporation office will continue receiving them for the next two weeks after which processing will begin.

Meanwhile, a delegation representing the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) Tuesday returned to Amman after a tour of the Arab Gulf countries where it examined those market needs of Jordanian agricultural products.

The AMO representatives also discussed competition to Jordanian agricultural exports to the Gulf.

The delegation toured Oman, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Bahrain where it collected data regarding produce sales and studied obstacles facing the marketing of Jordanian produce in the Gulf.

In January, the AMO announced that last year Jordan exported 355,900 tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables worth an estimated JD 72.2 million.

Sales figures demonstrated an increase of 24.1 per cent over 1995 exports, the marketing organisation said, with vegetables accounting for nearly 81 per cent of the total exports.

The United Arab Emirates topped the list of importing countries.

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## French officials express concern over Kingdom's ban on meat, dairy imports

AMMAN (J.T.) — A French delegation representing the ministries of agriculture, fisheries and forestry Tuesday expressed concern over the Kingdom's ban on meat, dairy imports.

The delegation, headed by Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Michel Kheisba, said the ban was "unjustified" and "discriminatory" against French products.

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AMMAN (J.T.) — The government has resolved to promptly offer medium-term loans to farmers whose harvests were considered badly damaged by earlier frost and who intend to plant new crops during the current season, according to Al Ra'i Arabic daily.

Al Ra'i quoted Nimer Nabulsi, head of the Jordanian Agricultural Credit Corporation, as confirming that the government has also approved rescheduling those farmers' debts which are due in 1997 if they so request and if their crops were damaged by the past winter season's frost.

Mr. Nabulsi maintained the corporation's 20 national offices have already begun receiving applications for loans from farmers including those in the Jordan Valley.

He affirmed that corporation teams would be visiting the affected farm lands in order to estimate the extent of the damage.

Jordan Television Monday interviewed a number of farmers in the Jordan Valley who lamented that produce damage was overwhelming in some areas.

Mr. Nabulsi requested that farmers promptly send in their loan applications as the corporation office will continue receiving them for the next two weeks after which processing will begin.

Meanwhile, a delegation representing the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) Tuesday returned to Amman after a tour of the Arab Gulf countries where it examined those market needs of Jordanian agricultural products.

The AMO representatives also discussed competition to Jordanian agricultural exports to the Gulf.

The delegation toured Oman, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Bahrain where it collected data regarding produce sales and studied obstacles facing the marketing of Jordanian produce in the Gulf.

In January, the AMO announced that last year Jordan exported 355,900 tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables worth an estimated JD 72.2 million.

Sales figures demonstrated an increase of 24.1 per cent over 1995 exports, the marketing organisation said, with vegetables accounting for nearly 81 per cent of the total exports.

The United Arab Emirates topped the list of importing countries.

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## Zarqa fire attributed to incautious welding

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Fire officials Tuesday attributed the cause of a fire in Zarqa late Monday night, with flames apparently reaching a height of 10 metres and engulfing a clothes market, to a spark from a welding instrument.

"Negligence on the part of an employee, who did not follow safety procedures and was welding his booth near flammable material, sparked the blaze," Civil Defence Department (CDD) officials said.

They confirmed there were no casualties in the fire, which started at approximately 9:30 p.m. and destroyed almost 250 street stalls and several cars parked near the five-dunum market.

"Fortunately, all shops were closed at the time of the incident," Captain Farid Share' of the Preventive Awareness Department at the CDD said.

He added that although the fire spread rapidly to neighbouring stalls, it was brought under control in an hour.

More than 20 fire engines participated in fighting the blaze and preventing its spread to a nearby camp, Capt. Share' told the Jordan Times, adding that the Armed Forces and the Public Security Department (PSD) also took

part in the rescue operation.

Three CDD fire-fighters injured while battling the fire, were listed in good condition, he added.

Capt. Share' could not estimate financial losses, but shop owners Monday stated that these reached millions of dinars.

Also Monday evening, fire fighters in Irbid battled a fire in a pesticides factory in Al Hassan Industrial City, according to CDD officials.

No one was injured in the accident, which occurred in the Arab Company for Manufacturing Pesticides Capt. Share' maintained.

Investigations are underway to determine the cause of the blaze he added.

In other accidents in the Kingdom, PSD officials affirmed that a 24-year old man was killed Tuesday in the Abu Nuseir neighbourhood of Amman as a result of 'festive fire'.

The victim, identified only as Ahmad A., was attending a wedding, "when one of his friends began to fire a gun in celebration [of the event] and a bullet struck Ahmad," they said.

A PSD official confirmed that the department apprehended a 31-year old man, identified as J. K. in connection with the incident.

The suspect might be charged with accidental shooting, he said.

"Celebratory shooting is forbidden by law, but still we see individuals violating the law and shooting live ammunition to rejoice over weddings," the official said.

PSD statistics for 1996 reported that celebratory shooting ranked second in the category of accidental shootings with 13.04 per cent of the 23 cases of that year.

Meanwhile, in the Badia area, a 43-year old man was killed after a trailer struck him on the Hazeem Highway, a PSD official said.

According to the official, the victim, identified only as Mohammad A., was assisting a driver of another trailer whose vehicle had broken down.

Mohammad tied a rope to the broken trailer and was pulling it to help restart the vehicle, he said.

When it did start, he descended from his truck and untied the rope, the official added.

"The victim neglected to engage the emergency brake, and the trailer rolled down striking him," the PSD official said.

## Retailers rejoice over produce price floating

By Ghaila Alul  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — While retailers welcomed the floating of fruit prices and vegetables, consumers are complaining that the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Supply's move has led to a considerable price increase.

The ministry decision to remove the price ceiling follows years of debate and forms part of the government's efforts to liberalise the economy.

Retailers appeared happy with the decision, stating that it would put an end to monopoly.

"The decision is very good both for us and the consumers," retailer Basel Zu'bi said.

However, some consumers regretted the decision, accusing retailers of manipulation and profiteering.

"They described the floating of prices as detrimental to consumer interests especially those who regard fruits and vegetables as some of the least expensive foodstuffs."

"Yesterday, I bought one kilogram of lemons for 70 piastres," one consumer asserted. "Before the prices were floated, I bought the same amount for 40 piastres."

However, retailer Ziad Qaisi argued that the deci-

sion would grant consumers the right to choose fruits and vegetables according to quality.

"Now retailers can sell lesser-quality fruits and vegetables at lower prices, while the better produce can be sold at higher prices," Mr. Qaisi maintained.

He told the Jordan Times his prices have remained unchanged since the decision and that he will fix his prices later in accordance with prices of other green-grocers.

"The floating of the prices will guarantee competition among retailers," he added.

The ministry, which used to publish a daily bulletin

fixing the prices of fruits and vegetables, has now stopped this practice leaving the market prices to be fixed according to the forces of supply and demand.

According to Al Ra'i Arabic daily, the ministry will still publish a non-binding daily bulletin listing the lowest and highest prices of produce in the central wholesale market.

The newspaper quoted a ministry source as saying that the ministry will still fine merchants who fail to put price tags on their products. He said the fine would reach JD 300.

## Weekly tabloid, reporter, and former RCC director charged with slander

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Amman Prosecutor Jamal Zou'bi has referred the case of a writer, a weekly tabloid newspaper and one of its reporters to the Amman Court of First Instance on charges of slandering Deputy Samir Habashneh, a judicial source said.

Deputy Habashneh filed a lawsuit against Al Hadath Newspaper, journalist Nidal Mansour and Lyad Qattan, a writer and former director of the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), on charges of publishing false news items which he claims tarnished his image and dignity.

He is reportedly seeking

JD 1 million in compensation, the judicial source said.

According to the source, the court is expected to start hearing the case in the next few days.

In its Jan. 27 issue, the newspaper published a letter sent by Mr. Qattan accusing Deputy Habashneh, who also previously served as minister of culture, of "false pretentious nationalism" and abusing his position.

In his letter, Mr. Qattan alleged that Mr. Habashneh had only served eight of the 380 days of his tenure as minister of culture actually executing cultural work, and that he spent his remaining days receiving members of various tribes

and aiding in the appointment of their relatives in various government posts.

Mr. Qattan also maintained that the former minister fired him from his job as RCC director without justification and that Mr. Habashneh's actions stemmed from "my refusal to appoint one of his unqualified relatives in a position at the RCC."

He further charged that during Mr. Habashneh's one year and two month post as minister of culture he visited the centre twice.

Mr. Qattan also alleged that the former minister spent JD 31,000 on parties during the interview: "We do not know if this public money was really used for official ceremonies

or [if it was used] for parties."

He further accused the minister of receiving £30,000 to participate in a three-month English training course "when, in fact, the actual cost of the course was only £5,000."

In his letter, Mr. Qattan challenged Mr. Habashneh to disprove the veracity of any of these allegations.

Attorney Samih Habashneh, who is the deputy's brother, told the Jordan Times in January that Mr. Qattan's allegations were incorrect and that he submitted evidence to the court in support of the deputy's professionalism.

## Jemstone launches interactive web-site

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman-based Jemstone Network, the largest med-media project of the European Union (EU), officially launched its interactive web-site here Tuesday, according to a press release issued by the Amman-based Med-Media Regional Office.

The Jemstone Interactive Web-Site, designed and created by Arabia.OnLine, provides detailed information about the Jemstone Network, its plans and activities.

It is also involved in the creation of an Internet forum for journalists throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region.

To evaluate the programme, Med-Media held a three-day workshop involving 35 leading journalists who gathered in Amman to assess the programme's activities and future plans, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Addressing the opening session, Jemstone Director Tudor Lomas explained that the launch of an Internet forum for journalists throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region

was first announced at the Fourth Annual Conference of Radio and Television Organisations and Operators, held in Marseilles in January 1997.

"This is about freedom of speech and better quality journalism," he said. "Technology now prevents political censors from impeding diligent journalists from becoming informed and enlightening their colleagues."

"We are trying to strengthen and simplify this process for all media branches throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region," he added.

The idea of the Jemstone forum, as it is known, was the brainchild of Hussein Amin of the Adham Centre for Television Journalism at the American University of Cairo, according to the press release.

The project aims to provide a forum for professional journalists to discuss pressing issues and exchange information and advice on technical and journalistic issues.

The forum will be open to all journalists from the Middle East, North Africa and Europe.

## Joint Jordan-U.S. military commission to meet today

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## Zaire premier says army can defend capital against rebels

KINSHASA (AFP) — Zaire's Prime Minister Likulia Bolongo has called on residents of Kinshasa to denounce all suspect people, saying the army can defend the city against rebels but needs public support.

In a television interview late Monday, General Likulia declared that the Zairean Armed Forces, the FAZ, was able to hold the city against rebels who have swept across the eastern half of the country, but needed "the support of the people."

He claimed that inhabitants of all the towns conquered by Laurent Kabila's guerrillas since October were putting up "strong resistance to the rebels," but denounced wide divisions among Zairean politicians which had weakened the strength of the armed forces.

Gen. Likulia also renewed Zairean charges that "certain neighbouring countries" had sent regular troops to fight for the mainly Tutsi rebel alliance, claiming that Mr. Kabila was dependent on help from these forces. Zaire has previously accused Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi of involvement, charges denied by all these countries.

On peace talks which have been under way in South Africa, Gen. Likulia said he was "confident" they would achieve a settlement.

"But if they collapse, the FAZ is ready to end a truce and resume fighting," he said.

Frequently, Zaire's rag-tag army has looted and fled towns ahead of rebel advances and Mr. Kabila's men now control more than half the country, including the mineral-rich southeastern provinces crucial to the economy.

Gen. Likulia said he would talk to the transitional parliament, the High Council of the Republic, on the situation in the country, where "the state coffers are empty," but for notes with a face value of between 100,000 and one million new Zaires.

180,000 new zaires are worth \$1, but the biggest note in circulation is the 50,000 new zaire bill, because Zaireans refuse to take other notes arguing that they will worsen inflation.

On Monday, the United States urged Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko and Mr. Kabila to hold talks in South Africa, lamenting the difficulty in arranging the meeting.

It is "important for the rebels and the government to respond favourably to the South African proposal" for a summit, said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns.

Obstacles to holding the meeting were "quite disappointing, because we think the only way that any progress is going to be made in the current civil war in Zaire" is through such dialogue, Mr. Burns said.

Washington will give "all necessary support" to the efforts of the South African government and the U.N. special envoy Mohammad Sahnoun to arrange the direct talks.

he said.

The question was raised during a meeting early Monday between Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and South African Vice-President Thabo Mbeki.

Mr. Sahnoun said Monday that there is "still a small hope to concretise the meeting." He told AFP that both parties "continue to say they're ready" to meet.

Last Thursday, Mr. Sahnoun and South African Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Aziz Pahad, peace mediators in the ongoing conflict, announced in Cape Town that the two foes had agreed to meet.

But on Saturday, Mr. Kabila toughened his position, saying he only would meet Mr. Mobutu to discuss the conditions for the president's departure, while the head of state refuses to stand down.

The rebels have seized all key cities apart from the capital Kinshasa and are seeking to oust Mr. Mobutu, ruler for the past 32 years.

Meanwhile, China Tuesday denied it had sent any troops to Zaire dismissing claims by a senior rebel leader that 400 Chinese soldiers had flown into Kinshasa to boost forces backing President Mobutu.

"This is a 100 per cent rumour," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Cui Tiankai said.

"These rumours have no foundation and are designed only to damage relations between the Zairean and Chinese people," Mr. Cui added.

"China never sends its troops abroad," he said, adding "the People's Liberation Army does not have any mercenaries." Emphasising China's position of neutrality, he said Beijing would "continue to develop good relations with Zaire even if the government changes."

"Sino-African relations are based on confidence, mutual understanding and non-interference. That is our attitude to all African countries including Zaire," Mr. Cui said.

On Monday, rebel official Mawapanga Mwana Nanga claimed that 400 Chinese soldiers had arrived in the Zairean capital.

"We are not afraid of the Chinese, nor of anyone," he added, without saying whether the reported soldiers were mercenaries or Chinese government troops.

Zairean diplomats in Beijing also denied the claim.

"We have always enjoyed very close military cooperation with China," one diplomat said, adding that a brigade of government light infantry in Kisangani had been trained by China.

"But since the beginning (of civil war in the central African nation last year), China has chosen a position of neutrality," he said. "China has done nothing for either side, and no Chinese troops have arrived there," he added, speaking on condition of anonymity.



Zairean rebels leave one side of the Zaire River aboard a ferry to retrieve U.N. equipment abandoned on the other side of the river. U.N. operations at the refugee makeshift camps has been stopped by incidents of violence from the Zairean population (Reuters photo)

## Armenia denies attacking Azerbaijan

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) — Armenia's Defence Ministry Monday denied claims from rival Azerbaijan that Armenian tanks and artillery carried out major attacks in which dozens of people were killed and wounded.

Rejecting the claims, ministry spokesman Seiran Shakhshurian accused Azerbaijan of firing across the border over the weekend and seriously injuring three residents in the village of Paravakhar in northern Armenia. He also accused Azerbaijan troops of firing at an important highway along the border.

Azerbaijan Sunday accused Armenia of shelling Azerbaijan positions around the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh and along the northern part of the border.

They claimed Armenian tanks tried to cross into Azerbaijan, but were repelled and that at least 50 people were killed or wounded in clashes that allegedly lasted all weekend.

Azerbaijani President Geldar Aliyev said Monday his country doesn't consider the attacks a violation of the two countries' 1994 ceasefire.

He met with Russia's special envoy to the two countries on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, and pledged that Azerbaijan would observe the terms of the current truce.

Armenian military spokesman Shakhshurian denied anyone was killed or injured in the clashes, except the three villagers.

But Mr. Aliyev said there were casualties on both sides, though he did not provide figures.

In the village of Verkhny Salakh, 450 kilometres from Baku, the Azerbaijan capital, one Azerbaijani family held a funeral Monday for Arif Kazimov, 30, killed in the weekend fighting.

The two former Soviet republics are locked in a bitter nine-year dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous enclave inside Azerbaijan populated by Armenians who drove out Azerbaijani troops and proclaimed independence.

A truce signed in 1994 ended the war that killed 15,000 people and turned about one million others into refugees, but peace talks have remained deadlocked. Armenian forces presently control most of the enclave and some land inside Azerbaijan.

The 1994 ceasefire has largely held, but sporadic clashes continue. Last week, the Armenian Defence Ministry said its troops killed seven Azerbaijani gunmen who tried to cross into Armenia.

## Afghanistan's Taleban reject criticism of its human rights

KABUL (AP) — The hard-line Taleban government Monday rejected criticism of its strict Islamic policies leveled at a recent human rights conference in Geneva.

"The human rights envoys never visit any Taleban areas. They just collect information from our opposition zones which is wrong," Information Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi told journalists in the war-torn capital.

The Taleban has enforced a strict version of Islamic Law in the two-thirds of Afghanistan it controls, forbidding women from working, banning girls from school and forcing men to pray in mosques.

International human rights groups have assailed the Taleban's attitude towards women and its summary arrests of minority ethnic groups.

The Taleban is locked in a fierce battle with a northern-based coalition which espouses a more liberal view of Islam and which largely represents the country's ethnic minorities.

Most Taleban fighters belong to the country's majority Pashtun ethnic group. The coalition against the Taleban represents the ethnic Tajiks, Uzbeks, Shites and Muslims and a small Ismaili sect of Islam.

Mr. Muttaqi said human rights workers were frightened off by Afghanistan's ongoing civil war, claiming many were too scared to even drive the bumpy roads leading into Kabul.

He called on human rights investigators to visit Taleban zones before making statements against its leadership.

Mr. Muttaqi also defended the Taleban's record on drugs.

Afghanistan now ranks second only to Burma as the world's largest producer of poppy, the raw material used to make opium and heroin, according to the United Nations drug control programme.

The Taleban has banned growing and smoking bishish, a drug popular among Afghans, but has not moved to limit poppy cultivation.

Foreign anti-narcotics officials say most of the poppy cultivated in Afghanistan is processed into heroin along the rugged Pakistan border and then smuggled to Europe and the United States.

Mr. Muttaqi said the Taleban lacked funds to combat the lucrative opium trade, but would take action if given international funding.

"The U.N. Should come talk to U.S. about this issue. We are ready to cooperate and coordinate our activity to fight the drug trade," he said.

Farmers in southern Hel-

mand province used to cultivate more than 50,000 tonnes of cotton annually, Mr. Muttaqi said.

But years of civil war have destroyed irrigation systems and left thousands of hectares (acres) littered by land mines, reducing cotton output to a mere 2,000 tonnes (2,200 short tonnes) a year, he said.

"People cultivate opium because they need money," said Mr. Muttaqi. "But no one in Taleban zones can smoke opium or hashish."

Mr. Muttaqi also said the Taleban has sent a captured opposition commander in its southern seat of government in Kandahar, 550 kilometres southwest of Kabul, to face trial for sedition.

Mohammad Zaheer, who was captured by the Taleban last week during fighting in eastern Nangahar province, is the son of Haji Qadir, a powerful commander lighting the Taleban.

Mr. Qadir controlled Nangahar since the fall of Afghanistan's Communists in 1992 until he was overrun last September by the Taleban Islamic militia, which went on to capture Kabul.

The Taleban believe Mr. Qadir's forces are behind recent insurgencies in Nangahar and neighbouring Kunar province.

"But now there is no more danger to the Taleban in Nangahar," said Mr. Muttaqi.

## S. Korea leaves peace talks hanging in limbo

NEW YORK (R) — South Korea's top negotiators in the proposed four-way peace talks said Monday they were flying back to Seoul after they and U.S. officials failed to persuade North Korea to join the talks.

After a week of hopeful attempts among U.S., North Korean and South Korean officials, a spokesman for South Korea's U.N. mission said of his country's delegation: "They are flying back, all of them."

"They (North Korea) must have realised we cannot regard the so-called acceptance in principle with all those preconditions about four-way talks," Ji Won Suh told said in reference to an increase in food aid that the North demanded.

North Koreans have insisted they could not enter the peace talks between the two Korean nations plus China without guarantees of badly-needed food aid.

Mr. Suh said talks would be held on a "working level" which would include South Korean officials from its Washington embassy rather than from Seoul.

In Washington, a State Department official said working group talks had been held in New York Monday for two hours and "all sides agreed to continue them."

"At this time further work needs to be done and further meetings have yet to be scheduled, but they certainly are possible and the proposal is still on the table," he said.

He refused to comment on the implications of South Korea's departure, saying "they are not able to stay here forever so I am not surprised that they will leave."

Earlier Monday chief U.S. negotiator Charles Kartman and his South Korean counterpart said they were ready to enter into senior-level talks with North Korea's delegation.

The aim was to hear North Korea's reply to a year-old United States-South Korean proposal for four-party peace talks that would finally close the books on the 1950-

53 Korean War and replace a fraying armistice with a peace treaty.

Although North Korea negotiators told American and South Korean counterparts last week they essentially accepted the proposal, they conditioned that acceptance on demands for more food aid and lifting U.S. trade sanctions.

"At this point ... the North Koreans seem reluctant to come back to the Republic of Korea and the United States for the kind of full working session that we had anticipated," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

He said the peace talks proposal remained on the table but whether Pyongyang will accept it "is anyone's guess. And so there is a bit of a muddle in New York right now."

A high-level North Korean defector, Hwang Jang-yop, who arrived in Seoul Monday, raised alarms by reporting that North Koreans "have lost hope" and their desperate Stalinist government seems intent on waging war.

Mr. Burns said while the border between North and South is one of the most dangerous spots on Earth, the United States, with 37,000 troops there, remains ready to defend South Korea if needed and will maintain its military presence. But he noted that the landmark 1994 U.S.-North Korean accord freezing Pyongyang's nuclear programme was working well.

So despite Mr. Hwang's comments "we think that actually the events seem to indicate that the North Koreans, at least, are open to further talk with the United States, with South Korea, with Japan, with other countries in Asia who are interested in peace and security on the Korean peninsula," he said.

On the food aid issue, Mr. Burns reiterated earlier comments that if the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) makes another appeal "we need more. We would obviously look at that very seriously."

## Annan urges states to back chemical weapons pact

GENEVA (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan Monday urged states to ratify a landmark global treaty outlawing chemical weapons before it goes into force on April 29.

Mr. Annan said in a statement during a one-day visit to Geneva that he had written to heads of key states urging their ratification of the treaty which bans development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons.

The chemical weapons convention, opened for signature in Paris in 1993, has

been ratified by 74 of the 162 states that signed it, Mr. Annan said.

"This treaty is too important for the security of every state and future international stability to be handicapped by the failure of some to become parties," the U.N. chief said.

"Moreover, states that fail to ratify it will undermine their credibility in subsequent arms regulation and disarmament negotiations."

The pact has been held up in the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee chaired by Republican Sen-

ator Jesse Helms of North Carolina who argues it would be ineffective and expose U.S. Chemical companies to outside inspection.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Sunday conceded the outlook "for required Senate approval remained uncertain ahead of a debate on the pact scheduled for Wednesday."

Ms. Albright argued that failure to approve the treaty would harm U.S. credibility. "We will be in the same position as Iraq and Libya," she said of two non-signatories to the treaty.

Russia and Iran are among the other nations that have not ratified the treaty.

The global pact was negotiated by the Ronald Reagan and George Bush administrations but U.S. President Bill Clinton has made it a cause of his own and launched a full-scale effort to win Senate passage.

Me. Helms has proposed provisions that would effectively bar U.S. participation in the treaty when it goes into effect next week, with or without the United States.

## Chechens mourn Dudayev on anniversary of death

GEKHI-CHU, Russia (R) — Thousands of Chechens gathered in a remote field Monday to feast and pray in honour of separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev on the first anniversary of his death.

The elusive rebel chief was killed by a Russian rocket which struck in an open field as he spoke on his satellite telephone.

Many Chechens and Russians believe the phone call had given away his location.

But as Dudayev's admirers, many of them wearing traditional lambskin hats, mourned at the spot where he died near the village of Gekhi-Chu, an early morning bomb attack raised the spectre that the separatists could be taking the independence struggle outside their Caucasus region.

No one was injured, but a monument to union between Russia and the autonomous region of Kabardino-Balkaria was slightly damaged in the explosion in the city of Nalchik some 70

kilometres from Chechnya's borders.

Local prosecutor Ruslan Abazov said he did not yet know whether the explosion was connected to events in Chechnya.

Chechen leaders had warned that rebels might stage revenge attacks on Russian targets to mark the anniversary.

A Moscow spokesman for the Federal Security Service said security had been stepped up around Chechnya.

Moscow and Chechnya signed a ceasefire last August, halting a 21-month war, but they have not settled the main issue — whether the rebel region is part of Russia or independent.

A Russian legislator participating in talks with the Chechens said Monday he expected an agreement between the two sides by next month, but said the final status of Chechnya would take years to solve.

"I think that by May we

will have agreed to a serious document," Vladimir Zoria, the chairman of the lower house of parliament's nationalities committee told Reuters. "Confidential talks are now taking place."

Salman Raduyev, a radical Chechen guerrilla commander, has threatened repeatedly to attack Russian cities although such attacks have not been carried out. An aide repeated the warnings after Raduyev was hurt in a car bomb earlier this month.

Abu Maysayev, the leader of Chechnya's National Security Service, said last week that he believed attacks might be launched in the neighbouring Russian regions of north Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan to mark Dudayev's death.

But he said such attacks would not have the approval of the Chechen leadership.

Dudayev declared Chechnya independent from Russia in 1991 and he led the fight against Russian troops sent by President

Boris Yeltsin in late 1994 to try to smash the separatist drive.

Chechens arrived in Gekhi-Chu in cars and buses along a small dirt-and-rock road to take part in Monday's informal commemoration.

Some carried portraits of Dudayev, others prayed to Allah near the unmarked memorial stone that marks the spot where Dudayev died. Later, the Chechens sang, danced and ate boiled beef as the event became more festive.

Several Chechen political leaders also arrived to show their respects on a hazy spring day. Another rally was expected in the Chechen capital Grozny, which the Chechens now call Dzhokhar-Ghala (city of Dzhokhar).

Some Chechens say Dudayev is still alive and in hiding, and may be getting ready to return to political life. They cite the absence of a grave and other details as evidence.

## DEA raids San Francisco medical marijuana club

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agents Monday raided a San Francisco club that supplies marijuana to sick people, seizing 331 pot plants and equipment used to grow them, officials said.

The early-morning raid on the "flower therapy" office reignited controversy over proposition 215, a measure passed by California voters last November that allows sick people and their "primary caregiver" to grow and possess marijuana for medical use when recommended by a doctor.

The measure put California law at odds with federal law, which classifies mari-

juana as an illegal drug and makes no exceptions for sick people.

DEA spokesman Stan Vegar said agents served a federal search warrant on the "flower therapy" office Monday morning and found an "indoor marijuana cultivation operation."

The agents seized 331 marijuana plants as well as high-intensity lights, fans, plastic tubing and other equipment used to grow them, he said. No arrests were made but the investigation continued, Mr. Vegar said.

He said the DEA's position, both before and after passage of proposition 215,

was that it would "investigate large-scale marijuana cultivation organisations."

"Flower therapy" is one of about five clubs that supply marijuana to sick people in San Francisco. Supporters of medical marijuana say the drug can help ease the pain of AIDS, cancer, glaucoma and other serious illnesses.

The Clinton administration strongly opposed proposition 215 and has pledged to sanction doctors who prescribe marijuana under the California measure.

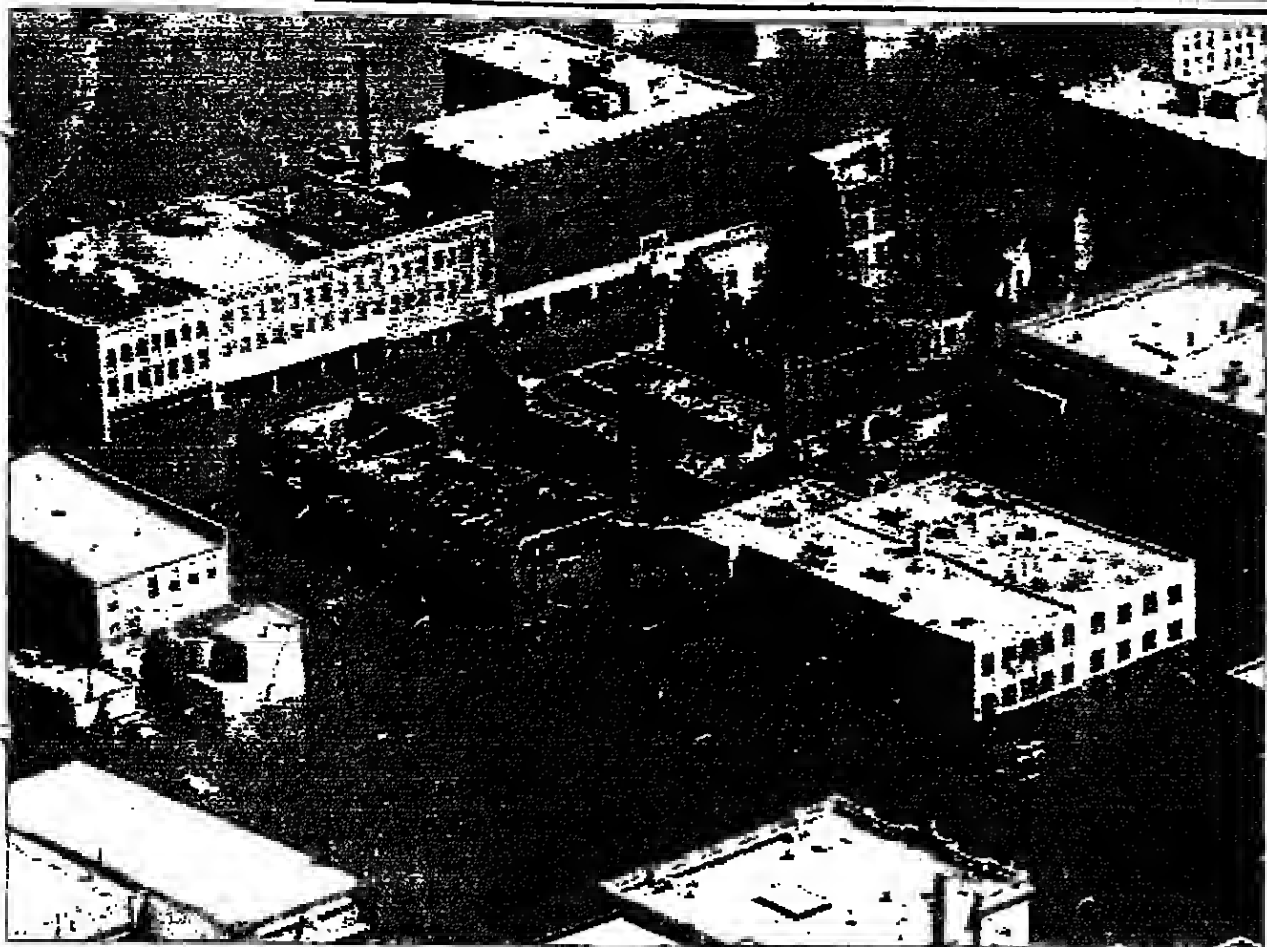
Opponents of proposition 215 argued that it would legalise marijuana by the

back door and pointed out that the food and drug administration had not approved marijuana as a treatment for any illness.

"Flower therapy" spokesman Todd Swindell said no club staff were present when agents entered Monday morning. He said the agents seized equipment worth more than \$7,000 but did not take records of clients or doctors.

He said he felt "sick to (his) stomach" when he learned of the raid. "This is medicine for people with AIDS and cancer, people fighting for their lives," he said.





An aerial view of burned out buildings surrounded by the flood waters of the Red River in downtown Grand Forks, North Dakota. The Red River has risen 25 feet above its flood level. At least 13 downtown buildings sustained fire damage when firefighters could not control a blaze due to the flood waters (Reuters photo)

## U.S. city staggers under flood, fire losses

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (R) — Boat patrols cruised the flooded streets of this devastated north Dakota city Monday searching for stragglers as cranes prepared to knock down buildings gutted by fire in the downtown district.

Roughly 90 per cent of Grand Forks was under water from the cresting Red River, which has flooded vast stretches of the northern U.S. plains for the past three weeks.

The White House announced President Bill Clinton would visit Tuesday, arriving at an air force base used as an emergency shelter by city residents.

"When he sees the disastrous condition we are in he will grant us assistance — much assistance," Grand Forks Mayor Pat Owens told reporters at a daily news briefing.

Flooding waters polluted with raw sewage stood as much as three metres deep in downtown streets, where gutted buildings stood gaping from the fierce weekend fire.

Across the Red River in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, houses were nearly submerged and some had floated loose from their foundations, the mayor of the town of 9,000 said.

"Many people left with only the shirt on their backs. No money, no possessions. We've told them to stay out of town for at least two weeks," Mayor Lynn Stauss said.

Officials worried that federal assistance of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per family would fail to meet the needs of many residents who have lost everything in what experts have called a once-in-500-year flood.

"I think we need to have money available for people to rebuild their houses. Grant money, not loans. The money available now is just not enough," said U.S. Representative Collin Peterson, Democrat of Minnesota.

The recovery effort cannot begin until the waters recede, and the river was expected to remain at its forecast crest at Grand Forks of 16.4 metres — 7.9 metres above flood stage — for several days.

Meanwhile, 120 kilometres upstream in Fargo, where a massive diking operation kept the state's largest city mostly dry, the waters were dropping by an 2.5 centimetres an hour.

But Grand Forks faced clear disaster. Journalists taken aloft in a national guard helicopter saw a city of 50,000 people transformed into a ghost town stranded amid a vast, chocolate-coloured swamp.

The business district, hit by a fire after floodwaters overpowered makeshift dikes Friday, was a blackened ruin and

motorboats manned by emergency crews puntered through the flooded streets looking for people and pets stranded amid the chaos.

Officials said they had moved a crane into downtown atop a flatbed truck to begin demolition work on the several city blocks that were consumed by the fire.

Despite the crisis, police reported only two burglaries — of an auto parts store and a pawn shop — and said efforts were now concentrated on removing people to safety.

Police spokesman Byron Sieber said a blind man and a "heavily medicated" 96-year-old woman had to be forcibly removed from their homes as floodwaters lapped at their doorsteps.

Meanwhile, residents of the farming town of Emerson on the border with North Dakota were being evacuated Monday and the military was called in to help fortify dikes along the flooding Red River, authorities said.

"We're evacuating all 750 people by 8:00 p.m. Tuesday," Emerson Mayor Wayne Arseny told Manitoba Premier Gary Filmon, who toured the threatened area.

Mr. Filmon said the province had requested emergency federal aid and that Canadian troops and army engineers were deployed as the threat of flooding increased.

"We've got 400 soldiers available in Manitoba and more elsewhere. We'll call upon them as needed," Mr. Filmon told Reuters.

The Red River is expected to crest in Emerson, about 160.9 kilometres south of Winnipeg, Wednesday.

Some highways in the area were already flooded and others were closed as bulldozers and residents moved in to shore up the ring dike surrounding the town with sandbags and other available materials.

Emergency vehicles stood by and helicopters hovered overhead through the morning as Emerson's main hospital was evacuated and hundreds of residents in the Red River Valley were notified to start evacuating their homes.

Further upstream, an emergency worker at St. Jean Baptiste, Manitoba, said the river was rising 3.810 centimetres an hour there.

Authorities said the U.S.-Canada border near Emerson would close at midnight (CDT) tonight and traffic would be diverted to northwest Ontario or western Manitoba.

## U.K. Labour say Santer speech ill-judged intervention

LONDON (R) — The opposition Labour Party has accused European Commission President Jacques Santer of making an ill-judged intervention in Britain's election campaign with his spirited attack on Eurosceptic "doom merchants."

But his blunt message proved an electoral godsend for Prime Minister John Major, whose party has been shaken by divisions over Europe and grown fearful of intervention by Brussels and erosion of national sovereignty.

In a speech in Amsterdam Monday, Mr. Santer railed against what he called "unjustified and misplaced" outbursts of Euroscepticism.

"Do these doom merchants want us to step backwards towards a Europe only composed of simple trading arrangements?" he asked.

Both Mr. Major and Labour leader Tony Blair have adopted a "wait and see" stance on whether Britain should join a single European currency, due to be launched in January 1999.

This contrasts sharply with France where President Jacques Chirac Monday called a snap parliamentary election aimed at revitalising the country before it joins the currency.

Mr. Chirac said a single EU currency was "essential" if we want to assert ourselves as a great economic and political power with the Euro on an equal footing with the dollar and the yen.

Mr. Major, trailing Mr. Blair by up to 20 percentage points in opinion polls for the May 1 election, passionately believes he can convince voters he is the right man to fight Britain's corner in Europe.

But many Conservative candidates, bidding to give the party an unprecedented fifth election win in a row, have said in their constituency election addresses that they would never vote to jettison the pound sterling.

Mr. Blair has given away his negotiating position in advance of the June European summit in Amsterdam.

"If it is right for Britain, I will keep my feet on the brakes," Mr. Blair would go to Amsterdam and put his foot on the accelerator to a federal Europe," Mr. Major claimed Monday.

Mr. Blair insisted in his one big foreign policy speech of the six-week campaign that he was the true British patriot.

"If there is a desire for a superstate, we will stop it. We want a Europe where national identities are not submerged," he said.

## Russia premier says deal with NATO possible on May 27

PRAGUE (R) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Monday a pact between Russia and NATO could be signed on May 27, but that Moscow's opposition to the eastward expansion of the security alliance would not change.

NATO officials earlier said a new round of talks between alliance Secretary-General Javier Solana and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, aimed at overcoming remaining Russian objections, had been set for May 6 in Luxembourg.

Asked at a news conference if the deal could be signed on May 27, as stated by President Boris Yeltsin last week, Mr. Chernomyrdin said laughing: "If the president said the 27th that means it will be ready on the 27th. As for NATO expansion, we will be against it even after that."

Mr. Yeltsin said in Germany last week that he hoped the NATO-Russia pact would be ready for signing in Paris on May 27.

The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are leading contenders to be invited to join the alliance in a first wave of new members, expected to be announced at a NATO summit in Madrid in July.

Moscow, which opposes the expansion, has demanded the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) should not station nuclear and other weapons in new member states and wants a binding treaty on relations between Russia and the alliance.

"It is not a question of NATO. We are talking about the military components of NATO," Mr. Chernomyrdin said after talks with Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus in Prague.

"We should not allow new divisions to appear in Europe, new blocs. That is why we are today against the expansion of NATO," he added.

NATO officials, who have stressed enlargement would proceed whether or not a deal with Russia has been signed, have said that the alliance has "no intentions, no plans, no reasons" to place foreign troops or nuclear weapons on the territory of new members.

The Czechs have said Russia's security concerns must be taken into account but say there can be no turning back on NATO expansion. Mr. Klaus said he understood Moscow's security concerns, but added that Czech NATO membership is "an expression of our interest in our security."

"We discussed our positions in detail. They are not identical because they are based on the different specific interests of the two countries. But I nevertheless believe that these differences of opinion will not lead to any complications in our future relations," Mr. Klaus said.

Relations between Czechs and Russians remain for many overshadowed by the 1968 Warsaw Pact intervention to crush the Prague Spring attempt to unshackle "socialism with a human face" in then Communist Czechoslovakia.

But Mr. Chernomyrdin and Mr. Klaus both stressed the need for closer cooperation, particularly in the economic field. "No going back, no repetition, but cooperation," Mr. Chernomyrdin said.

The two prime ministers also signed an addendum to a 1994 agreement on settling debt from Russia to the former Soviet Union to the Czech Republic, which

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## Romania pushes case for NATO membership in U.S.

WASHINGTON (R) — Romania pressed its case in Washington Monday for early NATO membership, winning warm words from U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright but no public assurances it would be among the first to join.

"We are sure that Romania could comply, could meet the criteria for NATO membership," Foreign Minister Adrian Severin said before talks with Albright at the state department.

"We are looking towards NATO and towards our NATO membership as being the confirmation of a unified Europe and as being the confirmation that Romania really belongs to the democratic family," he added.

Mrs. Albright, appearing before reporters with Mr. Severin, said she applauded Romania's aspiration to join the Western alliance, but she insisted that "no decisions have been made as of yet on who will enter NATO immediately."

The alliance will announce at a summit in Madrid in July which formerly Communist countries will be the first to be invited to apply for membership.

The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are seen as front-runners, with Romania and Slovenia considered possible.

France is Romania's chief backer in NATO, but the United States has also warmed towards Bucharest since a reformist government took over from ex-Communists last year.

Mrs. Albright reaffirmed that those countries not invited to join this year would still be eligible later.

"While NATO's enlargement will begin at Madrid it will not end there," she said.

"The door to NATO membership will remain open. The first shall not be the last and we are very pleased with the partnership activities that we have been involved (in) with Romania already," she added.

## Australian book claiming aboriginals were cannibals revives race debate

SYDNEY (AFP) — A new book by supporters of right wing MP Pauline Hanson revived Australia's race debate and sparked a fresh furor Tuesday with its claim that aboriginals ate their young.

"Pauline Hanson: The Truth", includes so-called "eyewitness" accounts of how aboriginals living near Cooktown in northern Queensland last century cannibalised family members after clubbing them to death.

"They killed and ate their own women and children and occasionally their men," said the book, being sold to raise funds for Hanson's newly launched one nation political party. "The older women were often killed for eating purposes like livestock," it said.

As Hanson's supporters including David Enthridge, national director of One Nation, defended the book as "well researched," various experts denounced it Tuesday as distorted or unsubstantiated by any evidence.

A leading authority on aboriginal history, Professor Henry Reynolds of Townsville's James Cook University, described the claims as "pretty disturbing" and said they were unsupported by any historical evidence.

"I don't think there's any credible evidence in the historical anthropological literature to sustain that," he told ABC radio.

"I mean, certainly there were writers in the 19th century who wrote sensational material along these lines, but to think that anyone in the late 20th century can take it seriously and put it forth without any evidence whatsoever I think is pretty disturbing."

He said in a radio interview that he was horrified to have been quoted in such a book and described Hanson as "more savage than any of the aboriginals."

Enthridge said the book had been intended to correct the history being taught in Australian schools and that other reference books supported its claims.

"Most people don't know that the aboriginal tribes were warring tribes and that they ate their new-born and they ate each other after wars and whatever," Enthridge said.

Clinton approves Burma sanctions

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton has approved imposing economic sanctions against Burma due to human rights abuses by the Burmese military government, an administration official said early Tuesday.

The State Department was expected to announce the sanctions, which will involve banning new U.S. investment in Burma, later Tuesday, the official told Reuters.

Mr. Clinton approved the sanctions, which will ban new U.S. investment in Burma, within the past few days, the official told Reuters.

The official said Mr. Clinton decided to go ahead with sanctions because Burma's military government had become "increasingly repressive lately" and was ignoring international calls for progress toward a democratically elected government.

The United States and many other Western countries have criticised Burma for human rights abuses and for failing to recognise the democratically elected government of the opposition National League for Democracy, which was co-founded by Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Mr. Suu Kyi was under house arrest for six years for her criticism of the Rangoon government. Mr. Clinton can impose sanctions on Burma if the democracy leader is arrested again or the situation in Burma worsens.

Last week, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright urged the pressure on Burma, criticising its military government for failing to respond to appeals to improve human rights.

"Burmese leaders are on notice that, unless the clouds of repression are lifted, they will face investment sanctions under U.S. law," Mrs. Albright said in a speech to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis.

The 53-member U.N. Human Rights Commission last week also passed a res-

olution voicing concern about continuing rights violations by Burma's military rulers, including extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, deaths in custody, torture, arbitrary arrests and forced child labour.

The Burmese government has accused the United States of using the threat of economic sanctions against it like a weapon aimed at destroying basic rights of the Burmese people.

The Burmese spokesman told Reuters that his government was more concerned about the situation in Burma than was the United States or any other foreign nation.

"If the U.S. is so genuinely concerned about the human rights of the Myanmar (Burmese) people, why is it so necessary to deprive one of the most essential rights of the Myanmar people — the right to earn a living and support the family?" he asked.

Whatever the outcome of the June session, world leaders are anxious to attend.

Many U.N. diplomats, including several ambassadors, spent the entire weekend at the United Nations to ensure that their government representatives obtained a prominent place on the speakers' list which opened for registration Monday.

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## North, south split as leaders prepare for Earth Summit II

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — North-south frictions are bedeviling environmental negotiations here as world leaders prepare for a June summit here which will take the pulse of our sick planet.

Delegates are meeting here until Friday to prepare for the June 23-27 special session of the 185-nation U.N. General Assembly, called to review progress and to chart the way ahead following the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio.

The Rio summit notably adopted conventions on combating climate change, protecting wildlife and plants and curbing desertification.

The June review conference is to be attended by a number of heads of state and government, including those of the world's main industrialised nations, who according to delegates will inject a strong political impetus into the process.

Environmental activists hope that the world leaders will commit their countries to new caps on the greenhouse gases that cause global warming, ahead of a key international conference on climate change scheduled in the Japanese city of Kyoto in December.

Delegates at the three-week preparatory session are currently negotiating the final text to be adopted by the June conference, with concerns focusing on diminishing water resources, energy conservation and the depletion of the world's forests.

But as happened in Rio, the forum here has produced a split between the develop-

ing south and the industrialised north.

More than 130 countries in the so-called group of 77 are clamouring for the developed countries to live up to a promise in Rio in which they offered financial support and the transfer of environmentally-sound technology to the developing world.

According to delegates, the group of 77 is systematically proposing revisions to the draft text on the major issues, including reducing fossil fuel consumption and

pollution caused by combustion, in a bid to put pressure on the north on financing.

Kevin Dunyon, director of Friends of the Earth International, said Monday the stand "may be a calculated strategy, but it is a dangerous one. While the question of financial support is important, these are two separate issues. The climate of the Earth is too important to risk on a negotiating strategy."

Some delegates expressed concern that because of the

blockage, the conference could wind up Friday without completion of the draft text.

But conference chairman Mostafa Tolba of Egypt told journalists here that "we are not at all panicking at this stage."

He said that if the session here failed to finalise its work, a committee would continue to negotiate the final text on the sidelines of the June special session.

Environment ministers who attended the first week of discussions here agreed

that conserving fresh water has been thrust to the top of the agenda, with the United Nations warning that world water stocks are not being replenished and could start drying up by the year 2025.

European delegations, their countries threatened by drought, are pressing for the adoption of a global plan of action to counter the problem.

"Water is the next oil crisis," says Canadian Environment Minister Sergio Marchi, referring to the 1973 oil crisis which

pushed up prices and forced governments to take conservation measures.

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## Jordan Times

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## Preparing for elections

THERE ARE two major efforts to merge political parties which have remained outside the orbit of the National Constitutional Party (NCP) that succeeded in merging eight centrist parties recently. There is on one side a bid by some members of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) and leftist parties to forge a coalition in preparation for the next general elections. Concerned by the merger of eight centrist parties under the banner of the NCP, Islamist Deputy Abdullah Akaleh is spearheading the efforts to form a coalition between the IAF and leftist parties on the premise that the two ideologically different groups can still cement a viable working relationship and run under one ticket.

On another side, there is a determined effort by "moderate leftists" to forge a similar constellation of political parties under the guidance of Suleiman Arar's Mustakhal Party and other political personalities including former prime ministers Taher Masri and Ahmad Obeidat, and Deputy Bassam Haddadin.

It appears more probable that the moderate leftists' effort to unite would succeed where the IAF-leftists attempts would fail. It is one thing to create a coalition between centrist parties whether on the right or the left, which enjoy several common denominators on ideology and purpose, than to establish an operational link between parties which differ on several fundamental principles and objectives. This is not to mention that the IAF is strong enough to wage an election battle on its own. The IAF could still emerge as a main political party in a three-way political party race that would include the NCP and the projected united front of moderate leftists. As things stand now, the newly merged NCP could prove to be an invincible match against the IAF if it stands alone in the upcoming parliamentary elections. It would be a fair match if the NCP faces the IAF and the combined forces of the moderate leftists.

A marriage of convenience between the right and the far-left may appear necessary under the new circumstances, but the odds against its long-term success are great. There are some meeting points between the right and far-left on some foreign policy issues and on a selected number of domestic policy considerations. But cohesion between centrists on either the right, as has already been done, or the moderate left, as is being now envisioned, would seem more durable and promising in the long-run.

We have a long way to go before seeing a clear crystallisation of political trends into definite party forms on par with the political sophistication that exists in more advanced democratic nations. And as long as the political currents in the country are still volatile and in search of a clear identity, forming coalitions, even between similar political trends, would seem more sensible in the transitional period on the way to a final regrouping of political currents on a more sophisticated level.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Rai Tuesday discussed the Jordanian-European partnership agreement which was initiated in Malta recently and raised questions about its details which, he said, remain unknown to the Jordanian public. Fahed Fanek said that the Jordanian public has the right to know the volume of the agricultural quota allowing Jordan to export crops to European markets, to know about the intellectual property rights and about the amount of European financial and technical aid expected for Jordan under the agreement. The writer said that such matters are of vital importance for the Kingdom where the various political and economic sectors should be involved in discussions because they have a direct impact on the people's lives. Perhaps, he said, these issues have been shelved momentarily by the concerned sectors because the implementation of the agreement will not take place before 1999, but a debate on these issues is important so that the public may realise the benefits and advantages of such an accord. On the whole, the writer said, Jordanians want to know from the government if their country will be offered privileges and favourable conditions and treatment no less than those offered to Morocco, Tunisia and Israel under the terms of similar partnership agreements.

A WRITER for Al Dustur reflected on the scandal in which the prime minister of Israel was reportedly involved and for which he was investigated by the judiciary. Orash Rintawi said that the mere investigation into the case which involved Netanyahu's alleged breach of public trust and fraud reflects a true exercise in democracy, especially as the accusations were levelled at the person of the prime minister. In contrast, the Arab media, which reported the scandal and the investigations which adversely affected Netanyahu's credibility, enjoy no right or power to publish similar accusations or charges against ministers or heads of states in their Arab World, said the writer. While in Israel the public holds their prime minister accountable for his actions, in the Arab World, people continue to send cables of allegiance to the regimes, especially those which came to power through military coups and continue to rule with an iron fist, the writer pointed out. The writer expressed the view that very few officials in the Arab World would remain in their present key positions if free expression and genuine forms of democracy were allowed to have their way.

## The Washington Watch

# 'The stage is set for press and public opinion to be even more responsive to Arab concerns'

IT IS not only organised political power that has given supporters of Israel a dominant role in U.S. politics. Of equal importance has been their ability to use that power to shape American public views about the Middle East.

They have succeeded in this effort not only with politicians but in the popular culture of the U.S. as well. For decades now Israel has been understood in the U.S. as "A tiny democracy that shares our values," "a beleaguered ally," "a people who only want peace, surrounded by Arabs who only want war," and other slogans that were repeated often enough, put into literature, made into movies and delivered in speeches until they were believed.

This is not to say that there were no large groups in the U.S. who refused to accept this dominant view. Arabs have always had allies, even in Congress and in the executive branch. But even these allies were sometimes afraid to publicly confront the dominant view — either for fear of political retribution or because it was too difficult to argue a case that was so little understood or appreciated by the public.

It is important to understand that this has been the political and cultural context in the United States for a number of decades, precisely in order to grasp the significance of the results of a number of recent public opinion polls. The findings of these polls establish that there has been a dramatic sea change in U.S. public attitudes towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In two separate polls, one conducted by the Harris Company, the other by

Zogby International, it is clear that the U.S. public has moved towards a greater sense of balance and fairness in its understanding of the Middle East.

These are the results: — Two Arab leaders, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein were viewed as being more committed to peace than Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. — Americans view Israel and the Palestinians equally at fault for the current crisis in the Middle East peace process.

— By almost five to one, Americans oppose Israel's settlement construction in East Jerusalem and want it to stop.

— By four to one, Americans support the Palestinian's right to statehood.

— By a significant majority, Americans want U.S. Middle East policy to be more balanced and less pro-Israeli.

— Americans are divided over whether Jerusalem should be under sole Israeli control or divided between Israeli and Palestinian control — with a plurality supporting a divided city.

Reviewing U.S. polls taken during the 1970s and 1980s demonstrates just how dramatic the change has been:

— Only Egyptian President Sadat had higher ratings than an Israeli leader. And no Israeli leader has ever had a net negative rating. Even Begin, during the 1982 assault on Lebanon, had a strong positive rating. — Americans always gave greater sympathy for Israel and greater blame for the Palestinians. Israel usually bested the Arabs in

American opinion ten to one — during the war in Lebanon this dropped to four to one, but quickly recouped.

— Americans never before expressed strong opposition to an Israeli move. Israel's actions in Lebanon were supported by U.S. popular opinion, as were past Israeli settlement developments — even when they were called illegal by the State Department.

— When asked whether U.S. policy should support Israel or be balanced, Americans almost always gave stronger support to a policy that would favour Israel; and

— In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when asked who should control Jerusalem, American support for sole Jewish control over the city was in the 67 to 72 per cent range, with the divided city option always receiving less than 25 per cent.

There have been significant factors that account for this shift:

— Camp David, despite Arab opposition, created a breakthrough in U.S. opinion. For the first time, an Arab leader emerged as a peace maker; the U.S. became a partner in the search for peace; the issue of Palestinian rights was put on the table to be debated by public opinion; and Israeli intransigence was put to the test;

— The Israeli assault on Lebanon exposed Americans to Israel's brutality. Even though Americans continued to support Israel's objectives in the war, ultimately Israeli behaviour in Lebanon took a toll on U.S. support for that country;

— The Palestinian intifada

brought home, once again, Israeli brutality. The drama of a mass Palestinian uprising created a swell of support and won more allies for Arab causes.

— The Bush-Baker design for a Middle East peace process and the abstinence of the Likud government established once again the tremendous importance that the U.S. places on the search for Middle East peace. This peace process also projected for the first time the Palestinian voice directly to a large and increasingly receptive U.S. audience;

— With the Clinton administration, Americans once again, as in the Carter years, found themselves fully immersed in the search for peace.

While some Arabs have opposed the conduct of President Clinton, especially his refusal to publicly criticise Israel, Americans have read him, especially in several key instances (the White House ceremonies, the Washington summit and his meetings with Arab leaders, including Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat), as being committed to balance; and in other instances, of being disturbed by Israeli behaviour;

— The election of Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has contributed greatly to changing American opinion. He is articulate but considered glib and untrustworthy — in some ways, Netanyahu is too much like the prototypical American politician that Americans simply do not trust; and

— Finally, it is important to acknowledge the role played by emerging Arab American organisations that have provided an American

voice to Arab concerns, challenged the press and politicians to show greater fairness and understanding in dealing with Middle East issues; and built coalitions and mobilised politically in the U.S. arena.

This much is known. There is a new political context in the U.S. The dominant pro-Israel construct that held sway over opinion and culture for more than a generation is crumbling. Politicians can deliver strident pro-Israel speeches but only before pro-Israel audiences — but the press and the broader public now greet such displays with a cynical edge.

The stage is set for both press and public opinion to be even more responsive to Arab concerns.

The question remains: What will we do about it? Both Arabs and Arab Americans must define strategies, each in its own way, to meet this challenge. Information work and political organising efforts must be intensified. Arab leaders must communicate directly with the U.S. press and public. And embassies should increase their political and educational outreach efforts.

Arab Americans must step up their work: by taking their challenge to Congress and by organising the constituencies of key members of Congress. If politicians insist on adhering to the old, unbalanced, pro-Israel construct, then their constituents should be informed and organised to act.

While the significance of this moment cannot be underestimated, neither can the possibility that this opportunity may pass if it is not acted upon.

By Dr. James Zogby

# 'Palestinian Legislative Council needs to strongly assert itself to ensure survival'

By Ziad Abu Amr

The writer is a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council from Gaza. The following article is a translation of an article that has appeared in the Arabic daily Al Rai.

THE FIRST legislative elections for the Palestinian National Council, held on Jan. 20, 1996, provided the Palestinians with an opportunity to build a democratic society and a modern political system. The elections themselves, though, were and are not enough to achieve democracy, political pluralism and respect for human rights. In fact, 15 months after the elections, one can say that the Palestinians are no closer to their aspirations now than they were a year ago.

Participation in the election was wide despite opposition from different political forces, like the Islamists and some Palestinian political elite who were against the Oslo accords. It was, nevertheless, encouraging and positive due to a number of reasons: the Palestinians were allowed to practise their democratic rights; they had the option to decide on their own future and they wanted to have the chance to influence the end result of negotiations with Israel. Except for a few minor incidents, the elections were held in a democratic atmosphere.

After the elections, the Palestinians followed with anxiety the work of the council to see if the candidates would keep their pre-election promises. Ever since the first meeting, March 3, 1996, the council members showed enthusiasm and diligence, aware of the moral, political and national responsibility on their shoulders.

Now, one year after the council was elected, the Palestinians feel disappointed. The council has not achieved any of its goals: it failed to assume its role as a legislative power and to clearly delineate the responsibility of the three state powers — legislative, executive and judicial — or oversee their actions. It even failed to approve draft laws it had discussed several times.

The basic law, the constitution, remained in the drawers of the executive power for months, even though the legislative council had approved it when it was first referred to it. The municipal and local elections as well as the civil service law met with the same fate.

The council has so far failed to hold meetings, independent of the PLO Executive Committee, with representative of the Palestine National Council (PNC), with peace negotiators or with heads of security forces. This is justified by the fact that the PLO insists on overseeing all national political activity. If, however, the cabinet does not manage to hold its meetings independently to solve problems and discuss issues under its jurisdiction, it cannot be held accountable.

The same applies to the judicial authority. So far, the judiciary does not enjoy true independence and, as such, cannot practise its role effectively. An example is the case when a higher court judge in Ramallah ordered the release of two students but the Palestine National Authority did not comply. The council has so far failed to make the PNA abide by the rule of law. Ministries and heads of governmental departments still do not come under the council's scrutiny; neither do the security forces. Basic human rights are violated. Individuals are arrested, detained or released without proper trials or legal procedures and prisoners are treated brutally.

The council has been unable to end chaos, insubordination and financial and administrative corruption in government departments. It has also failed to force the executive authority to use transparency in its financial policies. There is a number of reasons why the council reached its

current state of weakness, impotence and low credibility.

First, in the atmosphere of enthusiasm brought upon by the elections, the candidates and voters overlooked the fact that by virtue of its mandate the council would be less powerful than they thought.

Second, due to the manner in which the Palestinian leadership views the role of the legislative council, it seems that the leadership had ulterior motives when initiating the elections: seemingly it had more to do with satisfying the Israeli demands than with institutionalising Palestinian democracy.

Third, it appears that the emerging Palestinian body politic is so far incapable of transforming from a state of revolution into a civic society. The reason is not only the leadership's attitude but also the role of the different civic organisations. Although transition periods are usually complex and slow and the council's performance lacks in many aspects, it can still be used to speed up the transformation process.

Fourth, it is obvious that the balance of power is in favour of the executive authority that has and uses all political, administrative and financial means to reach its ends, including brutal force. The executive authority is not expected to relinquish any of its powers and the legislative to scrutinise its activities. The executive authority, which monopolises the political, economic and security resources of the Palestinians, has no interest in strengthening a weak council or in becoming accountable to it.

Fifth, the charisma, the tremendous influence and legitimacy of Yasser Arafat, the head of the PLO and PNA, and his distinguished manner of leadership hinder the council's authority or its appropriation of any real power from the executive authority.

Sixth, reportedly, there have been successful attempts to lessen the legislative council's

importance. One year of unsuccessful attempts to ascertain their independence, has left the majority of the council's members with a feeling of emptiness and loss. Some seem to have accepted the state of helplessness and are simply enjoying privileges they never enjoyed before. In addition, the council lacks experienced and efficient people to guide it to proper parliamentary life and initiate a civic society.

Seventh, Israel's policy of signing treaties with the Palestinian Authority and constantly violating them diverts the council from its legislative responsibility, drawing it into the political arena. The Oslo

agreements also impose restrictions on the movement of the council members in the Palestinian territories.

Finally, if the Legislative Council will continue its current policy for the remaining three years of its life, the Palestinians will have very little to be proud of. The Palestinians will have lost their opportunity to live their own democratic experience in a region where the West says only Israel practises true democracy. And that will most probably lead to erosion in sympathy for the Palestinian cause and weakening of the world's financial support for Palestinian state building.

## LETTERS

### Bdoul — a valuable asset

To the Editor:

IN THE article "Petra is not just for Jordan or the archaeologists, it is a world cultural heritage" (Jordan Times, April 16, 1997), once again the Bdoul bedouins of Petra were portrayed as a threat to the national heritage. They have lived in Petra for many, many years and their knowledge of the site, of the back country, and of the flora and the fauna of the region makes them as much a part of the national heritage as the ancient monuments are a part of that heritage.

Recently, in other parts in the world, peoples occupying lands that have become national parks have been successfully made part of the process. Such an approach at Petra would be much more productive than simply criticising the Bdoul for living and trying to work where they have always lived and worked. They have shown their value to Petra in many ways — twice I have seen them, in flash flood conditions, organise themselves to rescue dozens of tourists stranded in the back country. No one asked them to do it, they just did it. Their presence has caused many visitors to comment that one of the things that makes Petra special is that it is alive and not just another barren archaeological site. As an archaeologist working at Petra, I have seen the value of their knowledge of the site and have certainly seen that they are much less of a threat to Petra than are the developers. Jordan should incorporate the Bdoul into the development of Petra. They could serve, if they choose, as park rangers, guides, guards, emergency personnel, conservators and archaeologists. They are not a problem to be dealt with as the mentioned article would have it. They are a valuable human resource to be developed.

Patricia M. Bikai, Amman.

## IT OCCURRED TO ME...

# To sleep, perchance to dream

By Ali Kassay

THE YEAR 1997 appears to be a happy one for parliamentary elections. For a while now, headline space in the British press has been taken up mainly by the latest accusations and counter-accusations exchanged between government and the opposition. In Germany, Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced his intention to lead his party into elections for the fifth time. In France, President Jacques Chirac has just announced that he was too impatient to wait for elections to come due, and that he would hold them ten months earlier than scheduled. Everybody everywhere is excited about elections.

Jordan has not remained untouched by this frenzy. Even though our polls are still quite a while away, preparations have already started in earnest.

Recently, a number of parties that were highly similar to one another in their philosophies, outlooks, political programmes — in fact in most respects except for the tribal origins of their respective leaders, have seen the sense of coalescing into one party. In the past such attempts at coalition building were foiled because the tribe of each party leader threatened not to vote for him in the elections unless he were also the leader of the coalition, which prompted one alliance to present itself to the world with three secretaries general. Or maybe it is secretary generals. Or maybe there is a good reason why no one had thought of this contingency when they invented the English language, nor since. Perhaps as a result, the identity of the leader of this bigger and better coalition remains so far within the category of constructive ambiguity.

Not to be outdone by this move, other parties are suggesting a preposterous coalition between the Islamic Action Front and the "left", such as it exists.

This sent me thinking which way I should vote when I come to the ballot. My initial inclination was to vote for the party or group, or even individual that showed vitality and dynamism, and that had the most far-reaching effect during the past session. This left me still at a loss. You see, the number of bills initiated by deputies, taken as a ballpark figure, and rounded up for simplicity, amounted to one. One bill in four years. As for the number of bills defeated in Parliament... It was zilch. Not a sausage. Not only that, but deputies who had been elected on the strength of their promise to annul certain things, like the sales tax, for instance, voted eagerly in favour of raising it.

So what did the representatives of the people do during the past four years? Of course, there was the occasional exchange of ashtrays, glasses of water, and assorted unidentified flying objects and adjectives, which gave a lot of work to the tabloids, and much amusement to the public. Still, that apart, our gallant deputies must have done something, because whenever television cameras pan through the House of Parliament while in session everyone seems to be sleeping off some unidentified exertion. Recently, when I succumbed to the flu and spent several days asleep in bed, it was hard to convince any of my friends that I was not in training for a career in parliament.

The only explanation I can think of, is that there is a secretive, malignant and anti-democratic force that sprays soporific gas into the air vents of Parliament's climate control system, which suggests to me the next good cause that I should champion. Perhaps I may stand for elections on a platform that calls for saving the Jordanian deputy from a life under acute sedation.



In American classrooms, blackboard and ballpoint pen are rapidly giving way to computer and joystick

In a cooperative, customers are also owner/shareholders, so the relationship between Horry Telephone based in Conway, S.C., and its community extends well beyond the business arena. When the county school district realised state-of-the-art communications technology

The telephone cooperative's investment: \$1.5 million for the equipment, plus another \$250,000 for labour and other costs.

rooms. Teachers and administrators now had electronic mail: the endless paperwork that ate up so much of their time vanished. Announcements, sports scores, meeting times and special events were transmitted throughout the system at the stroke of a keyboard.

The programme, designed to utilise video and sound, works perfectly for student reports. Karetas was quickly able to master the software. "It's both easier and harder," he says. "Now our teachers expect more from us." He put together a report on censorship that, he says, earned him an "80 per cent." Instead of having to rewrite the entire paper to incorporate corrections and revisions, he called it up, and made the changes his teacher suggested in less than an hour. "I got a 90 per cent," he says with a grin.

"Before the network was set up, we had high aspirations for technology," says Angela Nadeau, a math teacher at Socastee High School. "It didn't get used to the extent it should have. Now we have a fever. Students and teachers are fight-



**Virtual classroom:** With co-  
fingers

Nadeau's students set up a weather forecasting station using software that allowed them to download weather information from a satellite — an interesting project in its own right. But now, using the so-called Wide

computer technology, the world

Area Net (WAN), they could provide live weather reports to other schools in Horry County and elsewhere in the United States. "Suddenly," says Nudeau, who wears a gold computer-shaped pin on her blouse, "what we were teaching

Development of  
memory functions is  
essential for students to  
become successful in the  
classroom. Use of effective  
memory strategies

What isolated Horry County created was the virtual classroom — a way of learning, presenting, exchanging and receiving information. Capable of reaching even the most dis-

Will Johnson, returning from his virtual visit to the Louvre, checks his Internet "Home Page" — his direct connection to some 20 million Internet users. The graduating senior discovers he has two e-mail job offers waiting for him, both from companies looking for someone familiar with computers. "I'm not ready," he says smiling. "I'm going on to college." In the clearest example of the teaching power of the new technology,

power of the new technology. 15-year-old high school students began visiting Horry County's Forest Brook Elementary School where they have begun teaching 12-year-olds how to work the computers.

Interestingly, the telephone cooperative's new

The lines are already in place to connect the first group of residential neighbourhoods to three school-based media centres, a network that will allow both students and adults access to educational resources and materials.

"Now every child in every school can be rich and well-funded," says Angela Nadeau as she watches Will Johnson conduct his tour of the Centre.

"Technology has opened up a whole new world. It was sitting there just waiting for us."

*The writer, a longtime Newsweek correspondent, is now a freelance writer based in Atlanta, Georgia. This article is reprinted from Siemens' magazine, New World.*

**AMMAN (Petra) —** Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawe' on Tuesday voiced the ministry's support for strengthening cooperation among the domestic media apparatus to better serve the Kingdom and its citizens.

Dr. Mutawe' who was speaking on a visit to the four daily newspapers: Al

Rai. Al Aswaq, Ad Dussour and the Jordan Times called for upgrading credibility among the Jordanian media for the betterment of Jordanians. "The ministry will be a link among our national media depending in covering news on accuracy," Dr. Mutawe' said the ministry would keep its doors wide open for all

The minister called for expressing views within "responsible freedom" and said that the ministry would increase the level of press freedom.

The minister was accompanied during the visit by the ministry's Secretary General and Director General of the Press and Publications Department Mohammad Amin and the Jordan News Agency Director

(Continued from page 1)

"After prosecutors have decided not to try him for corruption, maybe Mr. Netanyahu can now focus on the needs of peace such as freezing construction of the new settlement on Jabal Abu Gheimeh and stopping unilateral actions so he can give peace a chance," chief Palestinian National Authority (PNA) negotiator Saeb Erekat said on Monday.

The scandal had sidelined efforts to pull the Middle East peace process out of a deep crisis sparked by Israel's decision to build a Jewish settlement on Jabal Abu Gheimeh in Arab East Jerusalem.

Israel's ground breaking on the settlement in March led to a halt in PNA-Israel

peace talks and to violence which erupted again on Monday.

Israel's government remained intact after prosecutors decided not to charge Mr. Netanyahu, citing lack of evidence, in the scandal concerning the short-lived appointment of Roni Bar-On as attorney general in January, allegedly as part of a shady deal with a political ally.

Israeli opposition lawmakers and a public watchdog group went to the high court of justice demanding Mr. Netanyahu be charged, but legal experts said chances the court would force the prosecution to press charges were slim.

Market reaction to the events could not be gauged since the Tel Aviv stock exchange was closed on

Mooday and Tuesday for the start of the seven-day Passover holiday. Due to the holiday, no political developments were expected before Tuesday night.

Israeli troops wounded five Palestinians in a clash in the West Bank village of Soufif where the Israeli army wanted to demolish the home of a resident suspected of involvement in killing several Israelis over two years.

Mr. Erekat called the "Bar-On affair" an internal Israeli matter but warned Mr. Netanyahu not to take actions against Palestinians to try to divert attention from his domestic problems.

But in a televised speech broadcast live on Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu reiterated his hard line regarding

Jerusalem as Israel's unified capital and ruled out the emergence of a Palestinian state.

Palestinian Higher Education Minister Hanan Ashrawi assailed Mr. Netanyahu's comments, telling Reuters: "These are ideological statements that seek to preempt the outcome of permanent status talks. It is this attitude which has brought about the crisis in the negotiations and the peace process."

Mr. Netanyahu wants Mr. Arafat to put more effort into fighting violence and "terrorism," while the PNA linked the continuation of peace talks to a halt of settlement construction on Arab land.

attacks in retaliation for building settlements on Arab lands. Israeli and Palestinian security forces subsequently dismantled the Tel Aviv bomber's unit in the West Bank village of Surif, where around 30 people were detained.

But Israeli security also pursued its campaign against activists elsewhere in the West Bank, making wide use of the shifting

checkpoints which Palestinians have dubbed "flying roadblocks."

This tactic was first used during the years of the intifada, the 1987-1993 uprising against Israeli occupation, and was reinitiated during this month's sacrificial feast.

"They arrest people using lists of Palestinians suspected of involvement with Islamic groups," said one resident of the West Bank self-rule town of Ramallah.

Palestinian sources said those arrested included around 20 students from the theology faculty at Al Najab University in Nablus who were picked up in Israeli controlled zones around the self-rule city.

Also arrested was a Palestinian police officer. Muhammad Mohammad Sudqi Bari, 23, who lives in the village of Amatine west of Nablus.

According to Palestinian sources the Israeli army

arrested 21 other Palestinians at mobile blockades used in the area of the West Bank town of Bethlehem. An Israeli army spokesman was unavailable for comment Tuesday due to the Jewish Passover holiday.

Since the end of March, at least 72 Palestinians have been arrested by Israel for suspected links with Hamas and the Islamic Jihad movement which has also carried out deadly attacks

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# Arab Gulf countries face high bill for hydro-electric projects

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are facing a costly bill for electricity and water projects needed to meet a rapid increase in consumption because of growth in their populations, according to independent estimates.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, which get most of their drinking water from the sea given their arid desert land, are projected to spend more than \$30 billion on new desalination plants and \$72 billion on electricity projects until the year 2005.

Experts said such large investments could prompt the six members to hasten reforms to give access to the private sector in such fields as electricity and water that have long been dominated by the state.

Studies presented to a conference on infrastructure in the Middle East showed GCC countries would have to pump \$72.5 billion into projects to expand their power networks until 2005.

Saudi Arabia, the world's leading oil producer and exporter, is forecast to spend around \$58.1 billion while nearly \$6.2 billion

would be invested by Qatar and \$4.7 billion by the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Investments were projected at \$2 billion in Kuwait, \$1 billion in Bahrain and around \$530 million in Oman.

The figures did not include costs of water desalination projects but delegates at the two-day conference put them at more than \$30 billion.

"Desalination and power production requirements will continue to grow in the Middle East and the traditional methods of financing these projects will of necessity change, as the global economy changes," said Leon Awerbuch, vice president of International Bechtel Company. "Privatisation could be a significant vehicle in this process."

Economists said the new projects were needed to face a rapid rise in consumption in the 16-year-old political, defence and economic alliance, with water demand growing by 10 per cent and electricity by around eight per cent.

They attributed the high consumption to a steady

expansion in the non-oil industrial sector, the hot weather and a rapid growth in the population.

Independent estimates showed the GCC's population, of which nearly 40 per cent are foreigners, would grow from around 26 million in 1995 to 32.5 million in 2000 and 54.7 million in the year 2015.

Given their scarce underground water resources, GCC states get nearly 70 per cent of their drinking water needs from expensive desalination plants, on which they have spent more than \$150 billion.

The six members now produce around 50 per cent of the world's total production of desalted water of 5.36 billion gallons (19 billion litres) per day. Saudi Arabia alone accounts for 25.9 per cent.

"Gulf states need to invite private investors into their water and electricity sector or they could face difficulties in securing financing for such huge projects," a delegate at the conference told AFP.

"We are not talking only about construction and production costs but also about maintenance of those units

... But I think privatisation should be gradual and the government should maintain a shareholding so prices of such services will not be raised sharply after they were heavily subsidised," he noted.

Most GCC states have announced plans to carry out reforms to revive their economies after a slow-down caused by lower oil prices.

The reforms include privatisation of public enterprises, including water and electricity services.

Oman has already sold off part of its electricity sector and is planning to carry out water projects in participation with the private sector.

Saudi Arabia has stated its intention to sell part of its huge hydro-electric sector and other services to the public.

In the UAE, authorities are considering privatising Al Tawila desalination project, one of the biggest hydro-electric plants in the world. It was launched in 1985 and would cater to more than 800,000 people when it is completed in 2000.

## Further rises in U.S. interest rate could pose EMU challenges

BRUSSELS (R) — U.S. interest rate rises beyond market expectations could hit progress towards a common European currency but the latest boost to borrowing costs caused little concern, analysts have said.

The link between U.S. and European bond markets is well established. Analysts say the pattern is closest when the trend in rates is upward — and further U.S. rate increases are expected.

But with the U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) having moved in a pre-emptive fashion against inflation, while the growth outlook in Europe is still relatively weak, few believe the knock-on effect on European bond markets will be substantial.

As a result, the risks of higher borrowing costs for European Union governments, and the difficulties that would cause in meeting the economic convergence targets under the Maastricht treaty, are seen to be negligible.

"The actual conditions in Europe make the markets less vulnerable and better placed defensively to avoid a rerun of 1994," said Robin Marshall, chief economist at Chase Manhattan Bank in London.

Comparisons with 1994, the last time the Fed tightened monetary policy, were made by several economists, all of whom cited sharp differences in underlying growth conditions and inflation.

Moreover, the Fed's rate hike in 1994 came as a surprise to markets, unleashing heavy selling of bonds and shares across the industrialised world.

This time around, experts say U.S. monetary authorities have been wiser. Numerous comments from Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan over the past few months on the possibility of a rate move have defused the risk of a severe reaction.

"Greenspan has spent the last six weeks preparing us for this," added Mr. Marshall.

Another ingredient in the more benign outlook is the likelihood that rising U.S. rates boost the dollar, a development that would further benefit Europe's export sector and augment present growth and budget estimates.

"A stronger dollar helps the export sector and the German economy needs all the help it can get," said J.P. Morgan economist Jan Loeys.

But just how much tolerance U.S. officials have for continued dollar gains is now coming under greater scrutiny.

Comments by senior U.S. officials such as Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers have rekindled worries that the American authorities might want to cap the dollar's rise.

Recently Mr. Summers expressed concern about Japan's rising trade surplus, prompting the dollar to shed some of its gains against the yen.

"We are beginning to hear worries coming out of Wash-

ington to the extent the U.S. doesn't want to lose out on the trade side," said Steve Englander at Smith Barney in Paris.

More cautious than most about the effects of the Fed's policy tightening, Mr. Englander said European debt markets could become more turbulent in an environment of rising U.S. rates.

"Historically, asset markets in Europe have become more volatile when U.S. rates move," he added. "It could have an impact on growth and debt servicing."

The Fed last month increased interest rates for the first time in more than two years, raising its target for the federal funds rate that commercial banks charge each other for overnight loans to 5.5 per cent from 5.25.

Several U.S. analysts said the Fed's statement left the door open to further rate increases, possibly as soon as the central bank's next policy-making meeting on May 20.

REUTERS

REUTERS

### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	FRF	MLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.7142	0.6111	1.4585	126.23	1.3862	1705.25	1.9272	6.7859	
DE Mark	0.5834	1.0000	0.8911	73.64	0.8136	994.78	1.1245	3.7662	
GB Sterling	1.6365	2.8050	1.0000	206.48	2.2832	2790.13	3.1533	9.4689	
CH Franc	0.4662	1.1741	0.4184	1.0000	0.8645	1168.38	132.06	3.9632	
JP Yen	0.0079	1.3576	0.4838	1.1958	1.0000	110.87	13.24	4.1201	
CA Dollar	0.7167	1.2224	0.4375	1.0405	1.10	1209.47	1.3742	3.3884	
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0038	0.3378	0.0855	1354.28	0.8169	11.29	2.9999	
NL Guilder	0.5189	0.8900	0.3156	75.68	0.8442	0.7233	888.11		
FR Franc	0.1728	0.2961	0.1055	25.2107	21.79	0.2410	33.30		

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUN	AED	IRR	EGP
US Dollar	1.4124	0.7080	3.7504	0.3770	3.6400	0.3037	3.6726	1540.00	3.3850
Jordan Dinar	0.7080	1.0000	2.2972	0.5324	5.1412	0.4290	5.1673	2175.14	4.7810
GB Sterling	0.2666	0.1848	0.9188	0.1005	0.97	0.0810	0.98	410.62	0.9026
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8781	9.3488	1.0000	9.68	0.8058	9.74	4085.21	8.9784
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	1.0303	1.00	0.0834	1.01	423.08	0.9299
Kuwait Dinar	3.2927	2.3312	12.3490	1.2413	11.99	1.00	12.00	5070.79	0.9299
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	1.0212	1.00	0.0827	1.00	419.32	0.9217
Lebanese L1000	0.45	0.4597	2.4353	0.2448	2.3636	0.1872	2.3448	2.1980	
Egyptian	0.2854	0.2082	1.1060	0.1114	1.0753	0.0897	1.0850	454.96	

Energy		Mid-East Currencies						
Commodity	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Brent	18.30	18.06	SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4573	0.16263	0.38842	33.6712
W. Tena	20.30	20.30	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.46894	0.16638	0.39768	34.3843
Bony	18.30	18.05	KW Dinar	3.2827	5.64853	2.01207	4.81	415.8
Dubai	17.85	18.04	BH Dinar	0.3770	4.54899	1.62101	3.87447	335.008
UL Gas	188.00	188.00	CY Pound	1.9538	3.3491	1.793	2.851	246.59

Metal Prices			Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Commodity	Unit	Price	Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
Gold (oz)	341.3	341.8	USD	5.57	5.58	5.90	6.05	6.25
Silver (oz)	4.71	4.73	GBP	6.18	6.50	6.56	6.52	6.90
Platinum (oz)	376	377	JPY	0.53	0.56	0.56	0.66	0.68
AL (3 Months)	1593	1594	DEM	3.06	3.12	3.06	3.23	3.18
CU (3 Months)	2343	2348	FRF	3.29	3.40	3.50	3.52	3.55
Zinc (3 Months)	1263	1264	CHF	1.68	1.76	1.82	1.87	1.95
Lead (3 Months)	642	643	ITL	6.88	6.82	6.80	6.74	6.74
Ni (3 Months)	7430	7450						

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chg.	% Chg.	High	Low	Vol.	Chg.	% Chg.
NewYork	DOW JONES	6707.17	48.96	0.71	6707.97	6657.4	6560.21		
NewYork	S&P 500	763.58	3.21	0.42	763.58	759.9	760.37		
London	FT-SE 100	4346.1	17.4	0.4	4346.7	4319.2	4328.7		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	18544.45	-7.21	-0.04	18731.7	18489.9	18551.7		
Paris	CAC 40	2514.67	-8	-0.32	2533.88	2487.8	2522.67		
Frankfurt	DAX	3340.33	-7.25	-0.22	3356.37	3338.84	3347.58		

Energy			* JOD Cross Rates		
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Currency	Buy	Sell
Coffee (c/bb)	215.33	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1488	Spot	GB Sterling	1.1548	1.1606
Sugar (\$/ton)	313.1	Spot	DE Mark	0.4183	0.4174
Wheat (\$/ton)	178	Spot	CH Franc	0.4881	0.4815
Soya (c/bb)	23.86	Spot	JP Franc	0.1229	0.1235
Tea (wtg/kg)	142	Spot	FR Yen	0.5624	0.5652
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot	NL Guilder	0.3694	0.3712
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot	IL Lira	0.4172	0.4193

Energy																							
Commodity	Unit	Price	Commodity	Unit	Price	Commodity	Unit	Price	Commodity	Unit	Price												
Coffee (c/ton)	215.33	Spot	Cocoa (c/ton)	1488	Spot	Sugar (c/ton)	212.1	Spot	Wheat (c/ton)	175	Spot	Soyas (c/ton)	23.86	Spot	Tea (c/kg)	142	Spot	Barley (c/bsh)	0	Spot	Rice (c/ton)	480	Spot

### THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

1 Island near Java

5 Zeno was the first

10 Western school letters

13 — energy

14 Ancient Greek district

15 WKRP, e.g.

16 Partner of 45A

18 "a Camera"

19 Gaelic

20 Suffers from

21 Palmer, to fans

23 — canto

24 Lively, musically

26 Mead's milieu

29 Tile-shaping stand

30 Peace prize

31 Japanese city

32 Soft drink

36 Work by puzzle subjects

39 Brick transports

40 Fly sky-high

41 Lease anew

42 Acts as an accomplice

44 Deceived

45 Partner of 16A

48 Far out!

49 Anesthetic

50 Small whale

51 Bulge

55 From — Z

56 Work by puzzle subjects

60 Animation frame

61 Navajo dwelling

62 Obloquy

63 Otto's realm: abbr.

64 Solar features

65 Woman

DOWN

1 Pig

2 Charity

3 Disabled

4 Wrath

5 Fiber

6 Youngsters

7 United

8 A crowd, in old Rome?

9 Erie and Suez

10 Exploiting

11 Part of a flight?

12 Walk-on

13 That girl

17 A Perlman

22 Set free

23 Jungle knife

24 Shady place

25 Willingly

26 London district

27 Not up

28 Import

29 Finales

30 Utmost

31 Tight clusters

33 30A award site

34 Security interest

35 Play a part

36 Personality

38 TV horse

43 Burks

44 Redefined

45 Attain

46 Aquatic mammal

47 Indian dog

48 Checks

50 Card game for three

51 Ali —

52 Nickel word

53 Dept. store goods

54 Dessert

57 Short distance

58 Big head

59 Meander

### HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Find a quiet location where you can make some plans for the days ahead. Romance can flourish at this time if you maintain a pleasant attitude. Later this evening will be good for meeting with close friends.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) A big smile can bring you much assistance today, so keep a pleasant attitude and make the days ahead quite beneficial. The evening can be a very happy one for you and your mate if you simply show some affection.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Listen to the opinions of persons from various backgrounds today, and gain a new understanding of others. Make plans later this evening for a coming trip you need to take to make your career activities more successful.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Get the advice of persons today who have been successful in your field of endeavour, and discuss these ideas with your mate. Later this evening will be good for going out on the town with close friends.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) The unusual features of a new project should be brought to the attention of a superior, thereby you can make your efforts recognised and become quite successful. An interesting civic affair can be of great help to you.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Although you are satisfied with your success today, some new ideas can help you achieve even more. Cooperate more with your fellow associates and thereby you can achieve quite a lot of prosperity in the days ahead.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Enjoy the activities you have planned for the day today, however, also plan some entertainment for later in the week. A small risk could work out nicely if you follow the method of operation of a bigwig.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) This is the time today to put those new ideas in motion at home which will please you loved ones. Later in the day, invite some good friends over for a pleasant get-together which they will all very much enjoy.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Attend to important financial statements and reports today, paying particular attention to details. Take it easy and rest up later this evening, since in the days ahead your career activities could be rather hectic.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) Set up a better budget today which will allow you more recreational activities, however, don't cut out any basics. Be more thoughtful of your loved ones and devise a plan of action whereby you can be quite successful.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Get together with some of your close friends for a night on the town and you can all enjoy yourselves. Maintain a positive attitude with everyone you meet today and thereby you can create your own level of success.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) So many ideas for improving your lifestyle will occur to you today, it would be wise to write them down. Get an early start on your career activities, thereby you can gain the recognition of those in authority.

**Birthstone of April:** Diamond — Amethyst

### Peanuts







# 1st Division Basketball Championship

## First round enters final week

### as Jazireh, Orthodoxi clash Thursday

By Aileen Bannayan  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's 1st Division Basketball Championship moves into high gear this weekend as the first round enters its final week.

Former champions Al Ahli, who improved their image after a 73-45 win over Al Hussein meet Al Jalil Wednesday while champions Al Orthodoxi meet Al Jazireh Thursday night.

#### Alhi-Jalil

Both teams in Wednesday night's match are in unenviable situations having to put their house in order during the competition.

The match is not expected to be a competitive one but merely a chance for Al Ahli to regroup and upgrade their faltering form.

The teams from Irbid, Al Jalil, were not at their best at the beginning of the competition but some of the teams best players are back on the lineup after resolving their differences with the club's board.

Their opponents are also now putting their house in order as Al Ahli's board this week banded new Armenian coach Raffi Cholukian their reigns after the team's humiliating 85-57 defeat to Al Jazireh last week.

Apparently referring to lack of discipline on the part of players, Cholukian's first statement was: "Only players who seriously attended practice should expect to play in the league."

Cholukian, a former head coach of the Soviet Union's national teams was

recruited for the purpose of taking over the club's teams with the hope of taking Al Ahli to new heights after they failed to win the title during the past two seasons.

He takes over from Ghaith Najjar, Al Ahli's coach for the past two seasons, during which the team was unable to reclaim the title and have been in a slumping form ever since.

Many top players like Naser Bushnaq, Yousef Zaghloul and Marwan Ma'touq have also since left the team.

Al Ahli were previously trained by Ukrainian Alexander Sacha who guided the team to a 1990 win ending Al Orthodoxi's 1976-1989 reign atop the Kingdom's basketball scene.

Al Ahli went on to win the crown in 1992, 93, 94 before Sacha left his post after apparent differences with the board.

#### Jazireh-Orthodoxi

The match of the week is the clash between new title contenders Al Jazireh and titleholders Al Orthodoxi.

After ending Al Ahli's short-lived reign two seasons ago, Al Orthodoxi now hope to win the title for the third consecutive year.

Trained by Murad Barakat, one of the greatest players in Jordanian basketball, Al Orthodoxi face an uphill battle as their opponents are one of the most unyielding players in the country.

After their big win over Al Ahli, Al Jazireh have sounded the alarm as serious contenders for the title.

The players seem to have undoubtedly benefitted from their participation in the Arab Clubs tournament in Tunisia last month.

Under the guidance of coach Fadi Sabbah, Al Jazireh have come close to the title during the last two seasons, especially last year when they became the only team other than Al Orthodoxi to ever beat Al Ahli.

Since then, Al Jazireh have made the battle for the title a three-way race after fans became accustomed to only seeing Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxi battle for the number one position.

Thursday night's match is therefore crucial for both teams before the competition enters its second round April 30.

The match will be held at the Sports Palace at 6:15 p.m. JTV will air a recording of the match at 11:30 p.m.

#### STANDINGS

Team	P	W	L	SE	SA	Pts
Jazireh	2	2	-	199	82	4
Orthodoxi	2	2	-	180	120	4
Jalil	3	1	2	168	239	4
Ahli	2	1	1	130	130	3
Hussein	3	-	3	141	247	-
*Yarmouk	-	-	-	-	-	-

\*Relegated to Second Division



Lameck Aguta of Kenya breaks the tape to win the 101st Boston Marathon in a time of 2:10:34 in Boston, April 21. Joseph Kamau of Kenya finished second and Mexican Dionicio Ceron was third (Reuters photo)

## Denver Nuggets fire coach Dick Motta, staff

DENVER (R) — The Denver Nuggets, who just completed the second-worst season in team history, fired head coach Dick Motta and his entire staff Monday.

Motta and assistants Jim Brovelli, Gene Little and Kip Motta, son of the head coach, were relieved of their duties after guiding the team to a 24-61 record, the lowest since 1976.

The 65-year-old Motta had replaced Bernie Bickerstaff, who stepped down as head coach November 26. But the team went just 17-52 under Motta with just five victories coming after the mid-season all-star break.

The Nuggets, who closed the season with

a 100-95 win at Dallas Sunday, never seemed to recover from the loss of centre Dikembe Mutombo to free agency prior to the season.

In addition, forward Laphonso Ellis was limited by injuries to 55 games and Sarunas Marciulionis appeared in just 17 games due to injuries.

Motta, who had one year remaining on his Denver contract, came to the Nuggets from the Dallas Mavericks, where he posted 329 wins in nine seasons.

He is the second NBA coaching casualty in as many days after the Philadelphia 76ers fired Johnny Davis Sunday.

## Champions' League semi-finals live on Orbit-ESPN Sports

ORBIT-ESPN Sports will air exclusive coverage of both Champions' League second leg semi-finals on Wednesday, April 23.

Manchester United against Borussia Dortmund kicks-off the evening live at 6:25 p.m. GMT and is followed by the Juventus-Ajax of Amsterdam encounter at 8:30 p.m. GMT.

The Champions' League is the most prestigious club competition in the world and the semi-finals, played over two legs, brings together the four top teams in Europe.

There is still plenty to play for in both ties. In the live game English giants Manchester United must overcome a 1-0 deficit against Dortmund. With a packed Old Trafford cheering on the "Reds," it promises to be a thrilling encounter.

Defending champions Juventus will start as favourites in the second semi-final after winning 2-1 in Amsterdam in the first leg. However, the Dutch champions have not lost a European tie away from home for three seasons.

Orbit-ESPN will follow the Champions' League semi-finals with live coverage of the grand final in Munich on Wednesday, May 28.

Orbit-ESPN will also have live and exclusive coverage of the UEFA Cup-Winners Cup second leg semi-final between Liverpool and Paris St. Germain on Thursday, April 24 at 6:25 p.m. GMT.

Orbit-ESPN Sports will offer bilingual commentary for all games with English commentary on channel 19 and 89 and Arabic on channel 18 and 88.

## Costa brushes aside Portas to win Barcelona Open

BARCELONA (R) — Albert Costa brushed aside fellow Spaniard Albert Portas to win the Barcelona Open Monday, the day he moved into the top 10 of the world rankings for the first time.

Costa never looked in trouble during his 7-5, 6-4, 6-4 victory over Portas, a qualifier who was playing the first best-of-five-set match of his life.

"Getting to the top 10 is nice, but winning the Barcelona Open is much nicer," said Costa.

The final had been moved

to Monday because of heavy rain in Barcelona Sunday.

Portas, returning from a recent six-month lay-off due to a knee injury, was made to look out of his depth by Costa, who broke once in each set without losing his own serve.

Portas, who started the tournament world ranked 133, was let down by his powerful forehand which had helped him to victory in earlier rounds over seeded players Marcelo Rios and Alberto Berasategui.

The match had gone with

serve until the 11th game of the first set when Portas committed three errors to lose the game to love.

Costa took the set in the next game, and broke again in the fifth game of the second set, before coasting to victory over the only qualifier ever to reach the final of the Barcelona tournament.

"I was rather nervous in the first set, but I won the points at the key moments," said Costa. "After the break in the second set I saw victory much closer."



Spain's Alberto Costa celebrates after scoring the winning point against compatriot Albert Portas at the end of the Barcelona Open Tennis tournament final. Costa beat Portas 7-5, 6-4, 6-4 to win the tournament (Reuters photo)

#### GOVERN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF  
A TARIK HUSSEIN  
CROSS TARIK HUSSEIN

#### ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
A. 5 ♠ void, 10 ♠ 7 8 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q. 4 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
A. 4 ♠ 7 8 9 10 6 5 4 3 2

The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
3 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass  
4 ♠ Pass 5 ♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?  
A. - Diamonds is the agreed trump suit, and four hearts is a cue-bid. Therefore, we would cue-bid four hearts now. (Partner should not take it as natural; we could have supported spades on the previous round.) A practical alternative is a jump to six diamonds.

Q. 2 - North-South vulnerable, South deals:  
A. 4 ♠ 7 8 9 10 6 5 4 3 2

The bidding has proceeded:  
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST  
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
3 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?  
A. - This depends on your methods. If you play that a new suit here asks for a stopper, bid two spades to inquire about North's holding in that suit. If not, three clubs is the logical action.

Q. 3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
A. 4 ♠ 7 8 9 10 6 5 4 3 2

The bidding has proceeded:  
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST  
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
3 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?  
A. - Those 100 honors in spades are enticing, but don't let them interfere with the orderly description of your holding. It is important to tell partner that your hearts are five cards long, so rebid three hearts. Should that not be forcing in your methods, jump to four

Q. 5 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
A. 4 ♠ 7 8 9 10 6 5 4 3 2

Q. 6 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
A. - If partner has no more than the ace-king of hearts and ace of diamonds, you should be laydown for slam. The only way to convince partner of your power is to jump shift now to two spades, then support hearts at your next turn.

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CINEMA TEL:699238  
PLAZA

Eddie Murphy ....in

METRO

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Steven Segal...in

GLIMMER MAN

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

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Michael Jordan...in

SPACEJAM

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## Group 3 World Cup qualifiers UAE beat Bahrain 3-0, await match against Jordan

By Aileen Bannayan  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE) Tuesday scored a 3-0 win over Bahrain in the second leg/first round Asian Group 3 World Cup qualifying matches in Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

While Bahrain dropped out of the race for qualification, the win gave the UAE the group lead for now before the crucial match against Jordan Saturday when the group qualifier will be decided.

The UAE will automatically clinch the only qualifying berth from Group 3 if they beat Jordan. Even a draw against the Kingdom's team will be enough for the UAE to qualify.

However, set of complicated possibilities arise in the case of Jordan's win and by the number of goals scored since in the case of Jordan's win the two teams will tie in overall points and the goal difference will determine the winner.

Jordan is now second in the group after their 4-1 win over Bahrain which kept alive the King-

dom's qualifying chances after a dismal first leg showing in Manama, Bahrain where Jordan drew 0-0 with the UAE who beat Bahrain 2-1. Bahrain had then defeated Jordan 1-0.

The Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) had evaluated the Kingdom's results and described as satisfactory their goalless draw with the UAE in the opening match — a good result against a 1990 World Cup qualifier and currently Asia's second ranked team.

Onlookers had criticised the team for not being able to score in both their matches.

Even in eight friendly internationals in preparation for the qualifiers, Jordan could only score 6 goals altogether. Jordan's record included three defeats, three goalless draws and two wins.

The Kingdom's only wins were 2-0 and 4-1 in Muscat.

Jordan had two matches against Lebanon losing 1-0 and drawing 0-0.

In matches against Iraq, Jordan twice lost 1-0 while both matches against Syria ended in goalless draws.

This is the fourth time Jordan plays in World Cup qualifying matches after taking part in first round qualifiers for Mexico 96, Italy 90, and USA 94.

Thirty-six Asian countries are competing the first round World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into ten groups.

Group 1: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Taiwan.

Group 2: Iran, Syria, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan.

Group 3: United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain.

Group 4: Japan, Oman, Nepal, Macao.

Group 5: Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Yemen, Cambodia.

Group 6: South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong.

Group 7: Kuwait, Lebanon, Singapore.

Group 8: China, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Tajikistan.

Group 9: Iraq, Pakistan, Kazakhstan.

Group 10: Qatar, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines.

The 10 groups winners will qualify for the second round, to be held in Singapore, where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian finals.

The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

JTV coverage of  
Group 3 matches  
UAE — Jordan April 26 6:30 p.m.

### GROUP 3 STANDINGS

Team	P	W	L	D	GF	GA	Pts
UAE	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Jordan	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
Bahrain	4	1	3	0	3	9	3

## Cubs beat Mets again; Phillies rout Pirates

NEW YORK (R) — Scott Servais drove in three runs for the Chicago Cubs who took advantage of three New York Mets' errors on Monday to win 6-4 for their second straight victory after losing 14 in a row.

Frank Castillo allowed four runs and four hits with two walks and three strikeouts in six innings for the victory.

"We got a couple of extra outs," Cubs manager Jim Riggleman said. "When the opposition makes errors, you have to take advantage. We are still in a slump hitting."

The Cubs cruised to a 3-0 lead on Servais' two-run double in the fourth inning and his run-scoring single in the sixth.

"It takes a lot of pressure off losing," Servais said, "but we've got to get some of our boppers going. This is the best he's thrown. Our bullpen came in and did a nice job."

But it appeared as if Chicago would blow yet another game in the bottom of the sixth when the Mets exploded for four runs to take the lead.

In Pittsburgh, Curt Schilling became the first Philadelphia pitcher to go the distance this season and was backed by a three-run homer by Mike Lieberthal as the Phillies routed the Pittsburgh Pirates 10-2.

Schilling scattered nine hits — one to each of the Pittsburgh starters. He

struck out eight and did not walk a batter in winning his first game at three rivers stadium.

The Phillies did all their scoring in the first and last innings. They jumped on Steve Cooke (1-3) for four runs in the first and broke the game open with six more in the ninth.

"When they score those runs you have to get them out right away and protect those runs," Schilling said. "It is a jump start and a good kind of pressure."

### Yankees rally to beat White Sox

Cecil Fielder's two-out double in the eighth scored Pat Kelly with the go-ahead run as the New York Yankees came from behind to defeat the Chicago White Sox 4-3 Monday.

Paul O'Neill had hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning to tie the game for the Yankees, who took three of the four games in the series.

David Cone (1-2) survived a bout with wildness to earn the win. Cone allowed a career-high eight walks — one intentional — in seven innings. He allowed all three runs and seven hits and struck out eight.

Chris Hammond retired a pair of batters and was charged with a run and Jim Corsi also got a pair of outs before Heathcliff Slocumb pitched the ninth for his



Chicago Cubs second baseman Rey Sanchez can't get the throw away in time as he forces out New York Mets runner Todd Hundley in the sixth inning at Shea Stadium in New York. Batter Carl Everett was safe at first base. Cubs won 6-4 (Reuters photo)

the final two outs of the seventh.

In Seattle, Ken Griffey Jr. Had a two-run triple and scored the go-ahead run in a three-run seventh inning as the Seattle Mariners defeated the Kansas City Royals 6-5 for their ninth win in 12 games.

Seattle trailed 5-3 before rallying in the seventh. Bobby Ayala (1-0) got the win in relief of starter Randy Johnson despite allowing two runs and two hits in one inning. Norm Charlton got the final three

outs for his sixth save. Jeff King hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning for Kansas City, extending his hitting streak to 11 games.

In Anaheim, Darin Erstad drove home the winning run on a chopper to second base in the bottom of the 13th inning as the Anaheim Angels defeated the Toronto Blue Jays 5-4.

Rich Delucia (1-0) notched the win with 1 1/3 strong innings of relief. He allowed no hits and struck out three.

## NBA rivals see Chicago as vulnera-Bull

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Last year they were unstoppable-Bull, winning a record 72 games and taking 14 of their first 15 playoff starts to look invincible-Bull.

But the juggernaut run of the Chicago Bulls might not be repeated-Bull this year and top National Basketball Association rivals even suggest that Michael Jordan and company might be vulnera-Bull.

"I don't think the gap is as great as last year," Atlanta coach Lenny Wilkens said. "Chicago is the champion. Give them the respect their due. You can compete with them, though. The gap is more experience than anything."

Injuries to NBA rebounding champion Dennis Rodman and top reserve Toni Kukoc plus improvements by top rivals have removed some of the aura from Chicago despite a 69-13 season, second-best in NBA history.

Make no mistake, The Bulls are favoured to capture their fifth NBA crown in seven years. But they coasted home this year, losing three of their final four regular season games rather than trying to match their all-time record.

"We folded under the intensity at the end of the schedule," Chicago coach Phil Jackson said. "We had to play six games in eight days and it took its toll. We were trying not to burn ourselves out."

"We knew we had to save something at the end of the season. We will step it up during the playoffs. This team has the ability to reach another level. We know this could be the last time people see this team together."

Jackson, Rodman and Jordan are all one-year contracts and Scottie Pippen's pact expires after next season. Victory this year could prompt a three-year bid next year. A playoff loss could see the Bulls broken up.

"Are we vulnerable? I don't know," Jackson said. "We had injuries last year. We survived that and came into the playoffs ready to play. In the playoffs we're

### STANDINGS EASTERN CONFERENCE

#### Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Y-Miami	61	21	.744	-
X-New York	57	25	.695	4
X-Orlando	45	37	.549	16
X-Washington	44	38	.537	17
New Jersey	56	26	.683	3
Philadelphia	22	60	.268	30
Boston	15	67	.183	46

#### Central Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
YZ-Chicago	69	13	.841	-
X-Atlanta	56	26	.683	13
X-Detroit	54	28	.659	15
X-Charlotte	54	28	.659	15
Cleveland	42	40	.512	27
Indiana	39	43	.476	30
Milwaukee	33	49	.402	36
Toronto	30	52	.366	39

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

#### Midwest Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
YZ-Utah	64	18	.780	-
X-Houston	57	25	.695	7
X-Minnesota	40	42	.488	24
Dallas	24	58	.295	40
Denver	21	61	.256	43
San Antonio	20	62	.244	44
Vancouver	14	68	.171	50

#### Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Y-Seattle	57	25	.695	-
X-LA Lakers	56	26	.683	1
X-Portland	49	33	.598	8
X-Phoenix	40	42	.488	17
X-LA Clippers	36	46	.439	21
Sacramento	34	48	.415	23
Golden State	30	52	.366	27

X — Clinched Playoff Berth  
Y — Clinched Division Title  
Z — Clinched Conference Title

extremely fine tuned. We have to stand on our history."

Jordan won a record ninth NBA scoring crown but his 29.7-point average was the lowest of his title totals. Rodman won the rebound crown with 16 a game but missed 27 games due to injuries and suspensions.

"The possibility is they could be had in a game or two somewhere along the

way, because they are simply a little more vulnerable because they've had health problems," Miami coach Pat Riley said.

"They started to lose games when they were hurt. If they had kept their health, they'd have won 70 again. Losing Kukoc and Rodman for long stretches overruled the other guys."

### JORDAN TIMES

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## Central Bank drafts aggressive regulations to attract investors and hard currency into Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) on Tuesday finalised draft regulations on foreign exchange, set to ease restrictions on investments in foreign currency, free payments and remove obstructions imposed on transactions.

The new draft regulations no longer restrict foreign currency transfers to and from the Kingdom. The regulations also provide for the payment of foreign currency transfers to their consignees in either Jordanian dinar or foreign currency.

Under the regulations licensed banks shall be allowed to outflow Jordanian currency and gold, foreign currency and gold, and other foreign payment methods deposited in their accounts.

Under the new draft regulations licensed banks shall be allowed to open accounts in foreign currencies with correspondent banks abroad and are obliged to supply the CBJ with the names of these banks.

Licensed banks may keep up to 15 per cent of their foreign liabilities in return for

foreign exchange inflow into the country, surplus liabilities should be sold to other licensed banks in the kingdom or to the CBJ within one week in accordance with the new regulations.

The new regulations also allow licensed banks to run investment portfolios and joint investment funds in foreign currency and to trade with foreign currency on behalf of their clients on the basis of profit margins and exchange of assets in accordance with the current laws and related CBJ notes.

Licensed banks shall also be allowed to conduct delayed purchases of unlimited foreign currency from their clients against the rate of the Jordanian dinar provided that such transactions are made to cover prices of imports into the Kingdom, according to the new regulations.

They shall also be entitled to open accounts in Jordanian dinar and foreign currency for non-residents

provided they produce a certificate proving the client is, nonresident in Jordan. Withdrawal and transfer of amounts of nonresident's accounts is not restricted.

The new regulations stipulate any natural person residing in the kingdom shall be entitled to open accounts at Jordanian banks in foreign currency of unlimited amounts.

Legal persons residing in Jordan shall be entitled to open accounts in foreign currency at licensed Jordanian banks provided the total amount and its interests not exceed the equivalent of one million Jordanian dinars at any given time, amounts in excess of JD 1 million should be sold to licensed banks or to the CBJ.

Unrestricted withdrawals and transfers in foreign currency from resident accounts shall be allowed to cover their current expenses.

They also allowed the export of raw gold from the Kingdom provided payments be reimbursed to Jordan through licensed banks. They also allowed the

import of all types gold in all its forms to the Kingdom as well as freedom of movement of gold out of the Kingdom. Moreover, it allowed the removal of gold equivalent to the foreign currency deposited in Jordan.

According to the Director General of the Investment Bank, Issam Salfid, freeing restrictions on foreign currency would encourage foreign investors to invest in the Kingdom. "The new regulations will attract foreign investors to the Kingdom and will reassure them that they can sell their investments any time they want with no restrictions," commented Mr. Salfid.

Deputy Director General of the Housing Bank, Abdul Qader Dweik, said the new regulations would increase the flow of foreign currency into the Kingdom and restore Jordanians' confidence in their currency. "The new regulations will positively be reflected in the capital market and will increase the inflow of foreign currency into the Kingdom," said Mr. Dweik.

## Crown Prince briefs Pakistani delegation on peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday called for doubling efforts aimed at overcoming obstacles that impede the Middle East peace process so that comprehensive and just peace can be established to benefit all peoples of this region.

Speaking at a meeting with a visiting military delegation from the Pakistani Defence College Prince Hassan reiterated Jordan's full support for the Palestinian people in their quest to establish their independent state on their national soil and in exercising their legitimate rights.

At the meeting attended by Pakistan's ambassador to Jordan, Ali Sarwar Naqvi, the assistant chairman of the joint chiefs-of-staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces for intelligence

affairs, Prince Hassan described the Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian territories including Jerusalem as illegitimate, pointing to the danger which these settlements would cause to a just Middle East peace.

Stressing the need for building a comprehensive security in all its social, economic and humanitarian dimensions, Prince Hassan emphasised the need for regional cooperation in dealing with issues of common concern.

In his remarks, Prince Hassan referred to the contributions of the Jordanian Armed Forces and the Pakistani Armed Forces to the U.N. peace keeping forces and called for promoting Jordanian-Pakistani cooperation by maintaining a strategic dialogue.

Speaking at the meeting, the head of the Pakistani delegation expressed Pakistan's appreciation of and support for Jordan's stand and its concern over promoting cooperation between the two countries.

Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirza, chairman to the joint chiefs-of-staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces, received at his office the Pakistani delegation which is led by Major General Mohammad Anwar Khan and reviewed the general situation in the region, and Jordanian-Pakistani coordination as well as issues of common concern.

The Pakistani delegation heard a briefing on the development of the Jordanian Armed Forces in the presence of senior armed forces staff officers.

## Turkish President Demirel urges early general election

ANKARA (AFP) — President Suleyman Demirel on Tuesday called for early general elections, saying only a fresh legislative vote could bring Turkey out of a row between the Islamist-led government and the pro-secular military.

"The key to a settlement for the current rifts is an early general election," Mr. Demirel told the private television channel Show TV in an interview early Tuesday.

"Unless there is a fresh parliamentary election, the rows and tensions are due to continue," Mr. Demirel said. "The solution is through polls."

But Mr. Demirel complained that he, as president, did not have constitutional powers to announce new elections and said he did not know if the Islamist and conservative-led coalition controlling the current parliament would seek a fresh nationwide vote.

Mr. Demirel also called for reconcilia-

tion between Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's government and the powerful military, which sees itself as the guardian of modern Turkey's secular heritage. The two are involved in a bitter row over the country's creeping Islamisation.

"Those disguised under Islam should never dare to try to change the basics of Turkey's system," Mr. Demirel said, adding, "also the related ones should refrain from hurting the army."

"And the others should not hurt the feelings of the true Muslims who make up 99 per cent of this country's population," he added.

Mr. Demirel also said a potential military coup would destroy Turkey's democracy, saying, "you cannot save the democracy by destroying it first."

The government-army rift has raised public fears of a coup by the army, although top military commanders have ruled out such a possibility. The army

has staged three coups in Turkey's recent history with the pretext of preventing the state's destruction.

Tensions once more escalated last week as the commander of the military police in eastern Turkey warned the Islamist-led government against any attempt to undermine the secular system.

"By exploiting democracy, the Islamists are attempting to seize power through repression, even by cutting off heads as in the case of Algeria," General Osman Ozbek told a public meeting in the eastern town of Artvin last Friday.

This latest upsurge in Turkey comes ahead of the monthly meeting of the National Security Council (MGK), Turkey's highest advisory body, which will take place on Saturday.

The military-dominated MGK in February urged the government to implement a plan for a crackdown on pro-Islamist radicals.

## Turkish army dominates Kurdish rebels, but civilians pay the price

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (AFP) — The Turkish army seems to have gained the upper hand in its war against Kurdish rebels, but local civilians are paying a heavy price for the bitter conflict.

Hundreds of thousands of them expelled by the military from their villages in southeast Anatolia are living in total misery in this regional capital.

The population of the city has swelled from 380,000 in 1990 to 1.5 million today, and the infrastructure has proved completely inadequate to cope with the influx.

Forced to abandon their livestock, their houses and their fields, the villagers live in deplorable shanty-towns with no facilities, or crammed into apartments in the poorer districts.

They suffer from unemployment, malnutrition and disease. Turks were shocked earlier

this year when they saw on television dozens of women and children fighting in the mud for a few sacks of flour, donated by a local businessman and thrown from a truck.

Diyarbakir Mayor Ahmet Belgin, estimating that half the population lived below the poverty line, said the situation was a threat to social order.

A third of the region's 9,000 villages and hamlets were emptied or destroyed by the security forces in operations designed to deprive the rebel Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) of support.

Villages that were spared were generally those that agreed to form pro-government militia against the PKK, which is seeking a separatist state in the majority Kurdish region.

Human rights groups heavily criticised the tactics of a war which has killed more than

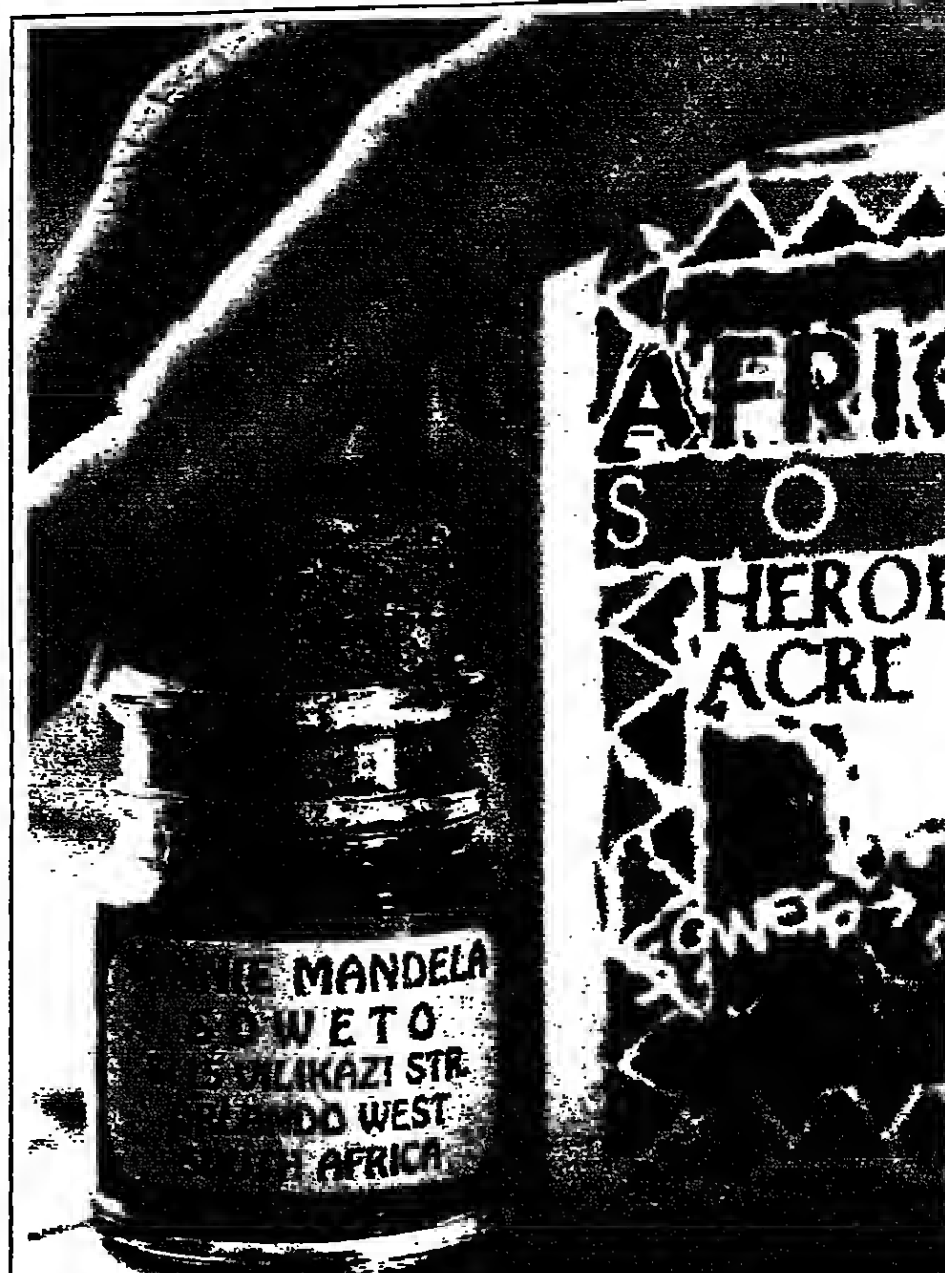
23,000 civilians, soldiers and PKK guerrillas in 13 years.

Felemez, a father-of-eight from the province of Lice now living in a Diyarbakir shanty-town divided by muddy streets and an open sewer, was expelled from his village in 1995.

Felemez said that in any case he could not return to his home without state aid. "I have no livestock, no house and no electricity," he said.

The money he got from selling his livestock before the village was destroyed by the army is now exhausted and he has no job. "I just don't know what to do," he said. "I cannot carry on."

Seyfettin Kizilkan, head of the chamber of Diyarbakir's doctors, said diseases linked to poverty were rife among the displaced people.



WINNIE NEEDS THE MONEY: Soil from the former home of South African President Nelson Mandela is on sale by his ex-wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, at the house they once shared. Tourists will have to pay \$12 a bottle to claim their piece of history. The house is one of many 'struggle sites' that form part of a thriving tourist industry in Soweto, east of Johannesburg (Reuters photo)

## SPLA says Sudanese peace accords a sham; war still on

NAIROBI, Khartoum (AFP) — A Sudanese former rebel has claimed that a deal cut with the military regime in Khartoum can bring peace to southern Sudan despite the failure to sign by mainstream guerrilla leader John Garang.

Kerbino Kuanyen, leader of a breakaway group from Colonel Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), said the peace pact signed on Monday will meet "all aspirations of the south Sudanese people," the official Al Sudan Al Hadith daily reported Tuesday.

Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha said that the accord signed with seven rebel factions was open to all, including Colonel Garang, who has fought since 1983 to end the Islamist north's domination of the mainly animist and Christian south.

The accord with six of the factions, splinter groups from the SPLA, provided for a referendum on self-determination in the south after four years. No details were given on the second agreement with a faction from the Nuba Mountains, also an SPLA offshoot.

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who seized power in a coup in 1989, also announced an amnesty from Monday for members of the factions who had committed crimes fighting Sudanese government troops.

The agreement stipulated that Islam is the basis of the law in Sudan, although federal states could have "special" laws, and Arabic is the main language ahead of English.

The SPLA recently launched a new offensive in the mainly Christian and animist south, capturing a string of towns from government troops.

Riek Machar signed the agreement for his South Sudan Independence

Movement (SSIM), Kerbino Kuanyen Bol for the Bahrel Ghazal group of the SPLA, Arok Thon Arok for the Bor group, Topolos Ochang for the Equatoria Defence Force, Kuaj Mekwai for the Independent Movement and Samuel Aro for United Sudanese African Parties.

Mr. Kwaje said SPLA forces captured the town of Wunrock, a stronghold of Kerbino Kuanyen's fighters in Bahr Al Ghazal state, on Monday, inflicting heavy casualties on his fighters and on government troops.

Rebels also overrun Togan town in the eastern Kassala state on Monday, Mr. Kwaje added.

In the Eritrean capital Asmara, an official in the Sudanese opposition Umma Party said Tuesday that rebels had taken 3,000 prisoners in government ranks at Yei in south Sudan on March 11.

Umma Communications chief, Ali Ibrahim Ali, added that these men had been persuaded by the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA), of which both Umma and the SPLA are part, to rally for rebel ranks.

He also said that the Umma Party of former Prime Minister Sadeq Ali Mahdi, who was ousted in General Bashir's coup, had held a secret conference in Cairo on April 18 and 19, but taken part in no discussions with the Khartoum regime.

A spokesman for another party in the NDA, the alliance forces, on Tuesday dismissed the Khartoum peace pact, saying that some of the factions concerned had long fought alongside government troops, while others had not even been heard of

missed as a sham peace agreement signed between Khartoum's military regime and seven other minor rebel factions. "We believe the agreements are a sham. These factions have been collaborating with the government since 1991 and the agreement only formalises that cooperation," Samson Kwaje, spokesman for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Nairobi, told AFP.

"The agreements are mechanisms of formally absorbing those factions into the Sudanese army. They will not stop the war," Mr. Kwaje added.

The accords, signed on Monday, between the government and six of the factions, splinter groups from the SPLA, provided for a referendum on self-determination in the south after four years.

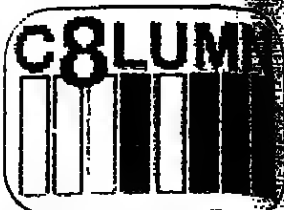
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Mexican prisoners use conjugal visits to dig tunnel

GUADALAJARA (R) — Authorities in Ciudad Guzman in Jalisco state said they discovered some of their 70 prisoners were using conjugal visits to try and dig their way out of jail. "It was in the area of conjugal visits," Alfonso Ramirez, secretary of the city government, told Reuters. "There was a small refrigerator and they were digging underneath that, but they had only gone about two metres down." They were scratching up against a retaining wall shared by a bank, Ramirez said. "So we suppose that they were trying to go to the bank."

Canadian boy admits cyber terrorism of his family

ONTARIO (R) — A 15-year-old Canadian boy has admitted he was responsible for months of notorious high-tech pranks that terrorised his own family, police said. The boy identified himself as the stalker, they said. Debbie Tamai, mother of the son the media dubbed "Cyber Punk," on Sunday apologised for Billy's actions in a statement. Since January, authorities have been hunting for "Sommie" — the name adopted by the boy who tapped into the Tamai family's telephone and electrical systems. Police said he disguised his voice electronically and cut into phone conversations by simply using an extension in his bedroom. He had eluded two full-time officers and as many as eight policemen assigned to the case.

Colombian tree-planting one for the record books

BOGOTA (R) — More than 10,000 trees were planted in a single minute on a hill overlooking Colombia's south-western city of Cali in a ceremony that should win a place in the record books. Bogota's El Espectador newspaper said a total of 10,720 trees were planted on the hill, previously adorned only with three austere crosses, during Sunday's ceremony organised by a local ecological group. "It was the world's biggest planting in a minute," the newspaper said, adding that Guinness Book of Records was sure to record the event.

Russian firm wins order to fly elephants to Africa

MOSCOW (R) — A Russian airline has won an order to export elephants to Uganda later this year. Marina Samokhvalova, cargo manager of Transcharter also said the firm had been chosen by British-based Aircraft Management Services to transport four to six elephants from the St. Petersburg zoo to the Ugandan capital Kampala. She said the elephants would be used in the making of a BBC documentary film. She did not say why the BBC had decided to send elephants from Russia to an African country. The elephants will be transported in containers on an Antonov AN-124 jet in September, she said.

Tunisian pre

PARIS (AFP) — Ben Ali has been elected president of Tunisia in the first round of the presidential election, according to the official results announced by the High National Council.

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